AAANZ 2024 Conference

PAST, PRESENT, POSSIBLE FUTURES

Pre-conference online event

Wednesday 27 November

Hosted by the **Centre for Art History and Art Theory** in the **ANU School of Art and Design**





Program Outline (all times in AEDT)

10.15am Introduction by Conference Convenors

10.30am-1.30pm Storyweaving with Oceanic Sisters (double panel)

Convenors: Dorell Ben, Eva Cruz

Speakers: Randizia Crisotomo, Leitu Bonnici, Vicky Lukan, Dorell Ben, Eva Cruz,

Teulia Hughes

1.30-2.30pm Lunch Break

2.30-4pm (parallel

sessions)

Unreliable Spaces and Connections

Convenors: David Cowlard, Annabel Pretty

Speakers: Yvonne Shaw, Paul Sutherland, David Cowlard, Annabel Pretty

Going West: Post-World War II Non-Aboriginal Artists in Remote Australia

Convenors: Jane Eckett, Sheridan Palmer

Speakers: Darren Jorgensen, Sheridan Palmer, Jane Eckett

Panel Details

Storyweaving with Oceanic Sisters (double panel)

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Randizia Crisotomo

Nurturing Inagofli'e: The Amot that Heals our Collective Grief through Chamorro he(ART) and Creation Stories

In this talanoa, I offer an articulation of how CHamoru anti-colonial he(ART)-work and creation stories serve as political and medicinal tools to creatively weave CHamoru grief care as an Indigenizing solution for navigating experiences of profound loss and intense grief. Through navigating creation stories and anti-colonial he(ART) it intentionally decentres intergenerational trauma and in turn prioritizes intergenerational healing in terms of mental-health access, healing, and well-being. This project ultimately frames grief as a political lens, drawing intersectional methods such as illustrative storyweaving and life-writing to confront the literalization of colonial trauma in Guåhan and the Marianas. Collaborating with Chamorro weavers, printmakers, illustrators, and educators, this project is a gathering of firsthand creative works of artful and critical thought to reimagine a future where Indigenous communities collectively, politically, and personally respond to centuries of loss and devastation through rebellious mourning (Milstein, 2017). By examining the persistent presence of grief in Guåhan and the Marianas, this talanoa underscores the scarcity of research that support grieving families and individuals, and their memories of our ancestors. It contends that we must grapple with the tensions of colonialism, occupation, and create new routes of unconditional compassion that dis-quiet centuries of intense—and silenced grief.

Randizia Crisotomo is an Indigenous CHamoru woman born and raised in Guåhan (Guam). She also holds relations with the unceded lands of Coast Salish peoples in Washington State as her family has lived as guests there for quite some time after moving away from home. She currently resides in O'ahu as a PhD student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, studying Indigenous politics within the Department of Political Science.

Leitu Bonnici

First Nations and Latin Characters

The worldwide reliance on Eurocentric communicative systems is used to dominate information recording and exchange by the West. Established communication architecture, from mass printing to digital frameworks, are built around the Latin alphabet. As perceptions of information are influenced by their methods of transfer, the reverence for the written word and the subconscious effects of typography contribute to cultural erasure and subordination. This is especially the case for the many Indigenous languages that have had Latin characters imposed through colonisation.

The objective of this investigation is to challenge the construction of typography by examining the wider cultural, social and political implications, and to speculate alternative approaches to type design that centre First Nations autonomy. Through an individual lens of someone with Sāmoan ancestry, Indigenous philosophies and methodologies will be applied through a variety of practical and artistic means. This will include the creation of typefaces and artworks, where singular letterforms will be considered as carriers of knowledge and conveyors of narrative. The work of Sāmoan-born type designer, Joseph Churchward, will particularly be reviewed due to the proliferation and recognition of his designs, as well as a familial connection.

Leitu Bonnici is a graphic designer, filmmaker and artist of Sāmoan (Faleasi'u), Italian, Maltese, Irish, English and Swedish ancestry (among others). She has lived and worked across Bunurong Boonwurrung, Wurundjeri Woiwurrung, Guringai, Dhurag and Kaurna Countries, and is currently based between Naarm and the Netherlands. She runs Le Phem Era, an interdisciplinary and anti-disciplinary practice that critically examines notions of ephemera through experimental forms of archiving and publishing.

Vicky Jade G. Lukan Daughter of Oceania

In this talanoa, the author explores the yapese concept of Gonop as an element of existential philosophy within the culture's overall knowledge system, from her own personal experience. Gonop is briefly defined as an innate ability to discern, but can operate as both noun and verb, interchangeably; It is not restricted to gender, although gender roles and protocols can influence the way Gonop is activated by an individual. She provides traditional contexts in which Gonop is encouraged and refers forward to her own experiences in the diaspora as a daughter of Yap, to explain how Gonop is activated outside traditional spaces.

Vicky Jade G. Lukan is a daughter of Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia. She earned her bachelor's degree in communications in 2023 and is now pursuing her graduate studies at the Department of Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She is the eldest of ten children and first left home at the age of 14 to attend boarding school. Her educational journey has led her to her current studies doing research in women spaces on her home island of Yap.

Dorell Ben

Rotuman Fa'i: Traversing Pasts to Navigate the Present

The Rotuman fạ'i is a cultural tattoo that is no longer a current embodying practice within the contemporary. My art praxis focuses on locating Rotuman tattoo motifs within histories and stories. I consider the significance of cultural protocols for a (dis)continued embodied practice. Through my wayfinding of Rotuman knowledge systems, alongside my own multiple ethnicities and heritages, I locate the motifs of Rotuman tattoo in different forms of art. I share these in various ways across different platforms. In this talanoa, I intend to share the challenges I face traversing colonial archives to locate Indigenous essences. I hope to be able to navigate the present to locate a prosperous Indigenous future alongside other Oceanic sisters.

Dorell Ben is an interdisciplinary artist and researcher, whose primary focus is on Oceanic cultural tattoos and liminal spaces within Indigenous knowledge systems. Ben explores the holistic connections of culture through her art and narratives, and the various ways an indigenous connection fosters healing and empowerment. Ben is a Gujarati-Rotuman woman from Fiji.

Eva Cruz

Menhalom, Senhalom Famalao'an: Awakening our Women's Embodied Wisdom from Deep Within

Like the native songs of the birds that were silenced on the Island of Guahan by the introduction of invasive brown tree snake and the poisoning of our lands by the US military toxic waste, the original ways and songs of our first women are buried in spiritual rituals and spaces that were controlled and ruled by the colonizer for over 500 years. Forcing us to sing without swaying, changing our words to suit the narrative and role of the blessed mother under the church had lasting implications for our notions of womanhood and the stories we carry and express as women relating to our people, our clans, our lands, our ocean, our ancestry, and our spirit. This creative action research dives into the context of CHamoru/Chamorro (Matao, Taotao Haya') femininity journey through new trajectories reached through embodied exploration of dance, chant, poetry and prayer, ceremony and ritual as the expressive physical representations of our memories and imagination imparted in our stories. This is experience is intended to, like the sakman(the large voyaging canoe), slash through the waves of constraint brought unto our shores by westerners, actively awakening our kånna(spiritual power) as famalao'an(women) and i minehalom(the deep wisdom) we hold in our bodies, wombs, and voices as the carriers of our culture and our bloodlines. Through this process of rebirth and revelation, I intend to embrace new abilities and relationalities that empower me as an indigenous Pasifika woman to co-create with practitioners from the shores of my home and beyond, to magnetize and channel new tides of creation that soothe the woes of our historical traumas and carry our daughters through to the peace of their living truth.

Eva Aguon Cruz, also known as "Eva Chamorrita" is CHamoru/Chamorro (Matao, Taotao Håya) cultural artist, educator, advocate, daughter and mother from the Marianas. Currently pursuing a Master's of Education specializing in Global Perspectives on Policy and Practice with a Graduate Degeree Certificate in Pacific Island Studies as an East-West Center Foundation Scholar at UH Manoa. Her research examines effective approaches to decolonization of educational institutions in Oceania through the integration of indigenous epistemplogies and ontologies. In her personal artistic practice, Eva explores the reawakening of pre-colonial indigenous wisdom through ceremony, chant, poetry, prayer, and dance as the embodiment, commemoration, and celebration of her ancestral legacy.

Teuila Hughes

Tofā sa'ili: Navigating the ocean within

Stories of the past tell us that it was on the va'a through which new possibilities were realised. Towards retracing the voyages of our ancestors across Moana Nui, we can acknowledge $v\bar{a}$ as a notion interwoven with their arts of wayfinding. The vasa (ocean) for which we can come to understand as vā, a space that connects peoples and lands, can also be viewed as one that fostered ways of knowing and being. Such ways of knowing and being can be seen through ways of navigation that were guided by embodied connections to lands, tides, winds and the cosmos. It was these moments of voyaging where this relational reality was embraced that moved our ancestors closer to the visions they had for the future. In shared breath, space and time, this offering seeks to engage a (re)embodiment of the relational realms of navigation as women of Oceania. Through means of storytelling and embodied movement, it launches a space that honours the body as vā; as a shared genealogical ground guiding us into waters of our becoming. In this way, vā will be explored as an embodied concept encompassing qafa (genealogy) as methodology to influence modes of (re)discovery. Prompting narratives that tap into our embodied knowing, experiences and explorations seeks to expand possibilities for co-creation, healing and a reclamation of indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being as Oceanic women. Furthermore, this offering seeks to foster a collective grounding in tofā sa'ili (a search for meaning and wisdom) through our vā bodies as living ancestors, holding and weaving spaces for future generations.

Teuila Hughes is a Ph.D. candidate and graduate teacher in Dance Studies at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland. As a Samoan woman, dance artist, educator and researcher, Teuila is drawn to discourse that unearths socio-cultural narratives, pertaining to identity and sustainability of indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being. Grounded in indigenous Oceanic theories and methodologies, her current research explores articulations of embodied knowledge within Samoan dance practice, pedagogy, and performance.

Unreliable Spaces and Connections

Convenors: David Cowlard, Annabel Pretty

Speakers: Yvonne Shaw, Paul Sutherland, David Cowlard, Annabel Pretty

Yvonne Shaw

Concretising the Moment: Photographing Psychodrama

In a psychodrama session the director will often say to the protagonist in the drama, *Go ahead. Set out this place in time. Use people, use chairs, use props.* The protagonist will begin to concretize a moment from their past. A living moment. As the scene is created, the director will ask the protagonist to describe what is before them. The group is present to a remembered place being formed anew, a transient structure in which the group members may be invited to become windows or doors or trees.

This paper investigates how the concretisation of people and places in psychodrama produces a mapping of relationships. It draws on the author's experiences of psychodrama and photographing psychodrama.

Yvonne Shaw is an Auckland-based artist and a PhD candidate at The University of Auckland, investigating the ways in which photography and psychodrama intersect, particularly with regard to spontaneity and the category of the moment. She is currently in her sixth year of psychodrama training and is an Associate member of The Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association.

Paul Sutherland

Suspicion Online: The Phenomenology of the Digitally Mediated Lifeworld and the Breakdown of Consensus Reality

The subjective experience of the 21st century lifeworld is largely mediated by digital, networked, and screen-based technology. This has serious phenomenological consequences for the way we understand the spatiality our world and the meanings of objects around us. Sociologist Anthony Giddens uses the term 'basic trust' to refer to the requisite faith lay people must have in abstract systems whose mechanisms are too complex to warrant fully understanding (Giddens 1991). I argue that rather than 'basic trust' in the reliability of things and the stability of meanings being the requisite way to navigate our lifeworld, a digitally mediated lifeworld promotes, and at times requires, a base level of suspicion instead. This base level of suspicion, in its milder form, manifests in phenomena such as covering one's webcam with tape to protect against hackers or insisting that one's phone is always listening to one's conversations. At its more extreme end, it manifests in schizoposting, an online behaviour purporting to doubt reality altogether. I argue that the broader impacts of a society of people each having to navigate their lifeworld with constant suspicion is a 'post-truth' breakdown in consensus reality itself. When the ontology of things can be drawn into question, what emerges in its place is a navigation of the lifeworld guided by individualised epistemologies and affective resonances over mutual consensus, magical or conspiratorial thinking, and the supremacy of connotative meaning over denotative meaning in the way objects in the world are perceived.

Paul Sutherland is a PhD candidate and sessional academic at the School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry at Curtin University. As an educator, Sutherland has taught units on photography and digital media art, with emphases on post-photographic practice and post-internet practice. Sutherland's interdisciplinary doctoral research is situated within social science and art theory, investigating the visual culture of online political extremism via a theoretical framework synthesising ontological security theory, affect theory and phenomenology. In May 2024, Sutherland's article "LARP Politics and Hyperreality" was published on Do Not Research, a publishing platform dedicated to art and writing on online culture and emergent political phenomena.

David Cowlard & Annabel Pretty Post Photography and Urban Scepticism

Post-photographic representations of the cities we inhabit are increasingly exhibiting seamless shifts from the digital to the real, profoundly altering our understanding of time, space, and the urban landscape in ways previously unimaginable. The convergence of digital images, architectural renders, communication networks, and extensive data recording all serve to expand the possibilities for observing and understanding the urban world, allowing for a richer, more comprehensive, and polyphonic account of cities and their complex social dynamics.

However, these new conditions of image production and reception have also brought us to the point of significant contradiction, creating a paradox where we are both more reliant on and more accepting of the digital, even as it contributes to a growing fragmentation of perception. In response to the pervasive seamlessness of digital technologies, some artists have adopted a more sceptical and critical stance. They actively seek out and utilize the fissures, gaps, and glitches within these technologies, which can act to slow down the processes of acceptance and uncover the inherent contradictions, thereby revealing what Franco Berardi (2019) describes as the "inscribed possibilities" within the urban spaces we inhabit.

David Cowlard is a filmmaker, photographer, sound artist and educator. His interdisciplinary practice explores urban representation and new forms of documentary practice. He works across media including, photography, short-form video and urban field recording. David is a senior lecturer at Whitecliffe College, Auckland, New Zealand specializing in Photography and the Media Arts and is the curator/editor of unreliablelandscpaes.net, a project established to investigate representations of, and discussion focused on, the digital city. He publishes across various digital platforms as @photourbanist and for @unreliable landscapes.

Annabel Pretty is the Discipline Leader for the Master of Architecture Professional (MArch Prof.) and a Senior Lecturer at the School of Architecture, Unitec Te Pūkenga, whose research investigations are located at the intersections between architecture, photographic representation of architecture, encompassing the diverse cultures associated with the reproduction, mediation, and reception of architecture.

The research trajectory includes supervising thesis students on the professional Master's, whose projects lie within art, architecture, and social architecture. Current research has sought to investigate—the hyperreal photomontage representations of architectural possibilities. Present study involves a Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture (under examination) at the School of Architecture and Planning, Waipapa Taumata Rau (University of Auckland) titled "Sublime Follies: Unveiling the Realm of Multiple-Reality Architecture". Visual representation and production can be found on Instagram at @annabelpretty and @sublime follies and writing @unreliable landscapes.

Going West: Post-World War II Non-Aboriginal Artists in Remote Australia

Convenors: Jane Eckett, Sheridan Palmer

Speakers: Darren Jorgensen, Sheridan Palmer, Jane Eckett

Darren Jorgensen

Aboriginalism, communism and itinerant labour in the making of an Australian iconography: Axel Poignant, James Wigley, Russell Drysdale and Sam Fullbrook in Western Australia

In the decades that followed the 1946 Pilbara Strike, Australian artists and writers were drawn across the continent to make pictures of itinerant workers in the regions of Western Australia. Some, like Sam Fullbrook and James Wigley, came to the strike camps to image the alluvial miners and pearl shellers of the north-west. Fullbrook had worked his way across the continent after hearing about the communism of the Aboriginal strikers, while Wigley had come from Melbourne's social realist circles to help. For Fullbrook and Wigley, art's labour coincided with the politics of labour. Other artists including Russell Drysdale and Axel Poignant came to create a new national iconography with images of camel drivers, drovers and other workers on the geographical edge of Australia's economy. In Double Nation (2023), Ian McLean argues that the fascination of Australian artists with Aboriginal subjects has as much to do with artists reinventing Australia as a pagan paradise, a place free of the travails of European society, as it does with their interest in Aboriginal people and culture. The primitivism of Fullbrook and Wigley played out the ideologies of an international communism that looked to the oppressed and Indigenous as figures for radical social change, while the iconography of Drysdale and Poignant sought to transform the impoverishment of north-west workers into a heroic melancholia. This paper looks to changes that these artists made to paintings and photographs as they navigated the production and exhibition of a new national iconography and changed their work to suit the fast-changing ideologies of a nation embroiled in both a cold war and a crisis of conscience over its Aboriginal population.

Darren Jorgensen lectures in art history in the School of Design at the University of Western Australia. His most recent exhibition, co-curated with Barbara Hale, was *The Strelley Mob* at the John Curtin Gallery in Perth in 2024. His most recent book is *The Dead C's Clyma est mort* (2023). His most recent journal publication is "New Histories of the Papunya Boards," in *Art Bulletin* 105.2 (2023).

Sheridan Palmer

Gone Bush: post-war artists' journeys to the Centre and urban fringes

Australian identity, Bernice Murphy wrote, relies on 'our relationship to place', and that this is 'shadowed by the psychic presence of "the outback" ... where European culture cuts out and gives way to the wide horizon of Aboriginal Australia' (Bernice Murphy cited in Impresario: Paul Taylor, The Melbourne Years 1981-1984, Surpluss, 39). Equally, one could ask how 'identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence' (Charles Taylor, Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition, Princeton University Press, 1994, 25). On returning to Australia from Britain and Europe around mid-century, numerous Australian artists experienced a lack of recognition, and subsequently a desire emerged to see and understand that psychic presence of the outback and its Indigenous people. Several of these artists had lived at the artists' colony known as the Abbey Art Centre on the outskirts of London between 1947 and 1954, where they were surrounded by the owner's extensive collection of antiquities, ethnographic and tribal artefacts. While the artists had absorbed the transformational postwar cultural climate of Europe, which queried national identity, it is important to ask to what extent did William Ohly's ethnographic collection at the Abbey, with its profound impulse of 'otherness' affect and inspire the artists both artistically and psychologically. In considering what drove these Australian artists to move away from the mainstream artistic circles of Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, and travel to the Centre, explore the outback or live in the bush, were they reconstituting a notion of 'otherness' or errantry—both in the nature of wandering as much as with a sacred mission (Édouard Glissant, Poetics of Relation, University of Michigan Press, 1997, xvi)—particularly in search of creating a new transcultural aesthetic and identity.

Sheridan Palmer is an art historian, curator and Honorary Fellow at the University of Melbourne working on postwar modernism. She was an Australian Research Council senior research associate (2020-2024) and is co-editor of The Abbey Art Centre and Postwar Art 1946-1956 (Routledge, forthcoming, 2026). Awards include a Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art research grant, a Harold White Fellowship at National Library of Australia. Major publications include Centre of the Periphery: Three European Art Historians in Melbourne (2008), Hegel's Owl: The life of Bernard Smith (2016), Antipodean Perspective: Selected Writings of Bernard Smith co-edited with Rex Butler (2018), and editor of the third edition of Bernard Smith's European Vision and the South Pacific (2021). Her forthcoming monograph, Lynne Boyd: LIMINAL, is contracted with Index Press (2025).

Jane Eckett

A peripatetic modernist: Peter Graham on Arrernte Country, 1954–56

When the Melbourne social realist painter Peter Benjamin Graham (1925–1987) returned to Sydney in 1950, after three years' frugal existence at the Abbey Art Centre, outside London, and rite-of-passage travels through France and Italy, he carried with him the advice of the Irish modernist Gerard Dillon to paint "the real Australia". Negotiating a sense of cultural dislocation and the difficulties of returning to his dayjob as a commercial lithographer, Graham dreamt of finding this "real Australia" in the central desert. In 1954 he travelled by motorbike from Sydney to Alice Springs, via Melbourne and Adelaide, remaining in central Australia for eighteen months. Working by day as a builders' labourer on the John Flynn Memorial Church in Alice Springs and government housing at Hermannsburg, in his spare time he painted alongside the Hermannsburg artists Adolf Inkamala and the Pareroultja brothers (Edwin, Otto, and Reuben) while also meeting the anthropologist, Ted Strehlow. Graham's work of this period comprised vivid semi-Cubist landscapes foregrounding kangaroo hunts and the spiritual lives and law of the Arrernte people. At the same time, he maintained his correspondence with Dillon who, from Roundstone, Connemara, concluded Graham had grappled with "a dreadful, powerful, emotional place", which could only be good for his painting (Dillon to Graham, 8 March 1956). This paper considers the impact of Graham's travels between coast and inland desert and his encounters with Arrernte indigenous owners. If journeying between cultures is paradigmatic of avant-garde practice, it can also prove a challenge for artists attempting to broach internationalist modernism with regionalist concerns. Peter Graham proves a fascinating case study in this form of oscillation: between the inland and the coastal and between the local and the international.

Jane Eckett lectures in art history and art curatorship at the University of Melbourne. She is co-editor and contributing author of *On Bunurong Country: art and design in Frankston* (McClelland, 2023), which won best Collaborative Community History at the 2024 Victorian Community History Awards. Other recent publications include 'Cultural nationalism and the avant-garde: Teisutis Zikaras in Kaunas, Freiburg, Melbourne' in *Meno istorijos studijos / Art History Studies* (no. 14, Dec. 2023) and, with Andrew McNamara, a chapter on Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack's monoprints in *Historic Avant-Garde Work on Paper* (Routledge, 2024). With Sheridan Palmer and Ian McLean, she is currently co-editing a book on The Abbey Art Centre (contracted with Routledge). The book and this paper are outcomes of a three-year research project (2020-2023), funded by the Australian Research Council, examining the artists of the Abbey Art Centre (ARC DP 200102794).

Panel Convenors

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Eva Aguon Cruz, also known as "Eva Chamorrita" is CHamoru/ Chamorro (Matao, Taotao Håya) cultural artist, educator, and advocate from the Marianas. She explores her personal expressions of identity through the art of ceremony, prayer, chant, poetry, and movement. As an educator and advocate, her practice and programs in the community integrate hands-on heritage-based experiences for young people, fostering positive consciousness and creativity through the cultural arts.

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