



Australian  
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University



eX de Medici, *Blue (Bower/Bauer)* 1998-2000, watercolour over black pencil  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2004 © eX de Medici

# Art and Mortality

Symposium: 19-20 September 2014

**Day one | Friday 19 September:** Sir Roland Wilson Building, Australian National University

**Day two | Saturday 20 September:** James O Fairfax Theatre, National Gallery of Australia

Centre for Art History and Art Theory  
School of Art  
ANU College of  
Arts & Social Sciences



## **Art and Mortality: Symposium 19-20 September 2014**

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**Day two | Saturday 20 September:** James O Fairfax Theatre, National Gallery of Australia

Death is one of the enduring themes in the arts, engaging visual artists working in all media. How do their art works, from the past and present, relate to contemporary concerns about dying and death? This two day symposium brings together leading art historians, curators and artists to discuss ideas associated with mortality and the visual arts. Topics to be addressed include: the symbolism of death, death and anatomy, death masks, photography and the limits of representation, the scene of death, and ethical and social issues. On the second day there is a special focus on works in the National Gallery's collection and a viewing of the exhibition *Arthur Boyd: Agony and Ecstasy*. Film screenings, *Tender* (2013) and *Amour* (2012), are also included in the conference program.

Convened by Professor Helen Ennis, Sir William Dobell Chair of Art History, Director of the Centre for Art History and Art Theory, ANU School of Art. *Art and Mortality* has been organised by the ANU School of Art Centre for Art History and Art Theory in partnership with the National Gallery of Australia. It is funded by the ANU Research School of Humanities, and the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences.

## **Centre for Art History and Art Theory, ANU School of Art**

**ANU School of Art (SoA)** is located within the Research School of Humanities and the Arts, College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS). The School prepares students for professional careers in visual arts, media arts and design, and art history. It has built a reputation as a leading arts educator offering specialist training in Art History and Art Theory, Ceramics, Furniture, Glass, Gold and Silversmithing, Painting, Photography and Media Arts (including digital video, computer animation, networked art and electronic sound), Printmedia and Drawing, Sculpture and Textiles. The SoA philosophy embraces the use of new technologies such as computer-based design and multimedia applications which are used to develop both new visual forms and to enliven and expand traditional media.

The newly-established **Centre for Art History and Art Theory** is part of ANU School of Art and focuses on teaching and research in a wide range of art historical and theoretical areas. It offers the Bachelor of Art History and Curatorship, and teaches courses in undergraduate programs, graduate coursework programs and graduate research programs. It also offers higher degree research (Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy) in art history and art theory.

Staff research specialisations are in the following areas: Asian art, historical to contemporary; curatorship; portraiture and identity; histories of photography; craft and design history; Australian art; and the history of artists' materials and techniques. The Centre works closely with the national cultural institutions located in Canberra and organises a number of public events and focused conferences and workshops every year. The Centre also hosts the Australian Consortium on Asian Art.



*Kirsten Farrell - Colour Theory, participatory performance, part of Walker and Bromwich's Art School Anecdote, 2013*

## **Life|Death: a photographic exhibition of existence and mortality**

**Opening night: 23 October, 6pm**

Photospace, Level 1, ANU School of Art

**20 – 25 October 2014**

For current events and exhibitions at the ANU School of Art

<http://soa.anu.edu.au/news-community-menu>

## Contents

Program with session times and breaks .....	4
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### Speakers' abstracts and biographies Day 1: Venue 1. ANU

Paul Pickering .....	5
Helen Ennis.....	5
Anne Noble .....	6
Rebecca Scott Bray .....	6
Joanna Gilmour.....	7
Patrick Pound.....	7
Elspeth Pitt .....	8
Victoria Perrin .....	8
Katrin Koenning .....	9
Geoffrey Batchen .....	9
Lynette Wallworth, <i>Tender</i> (2012) .....	10

### Speakers' abstracts and biographies Day 2: Venue 2. NGA

Christopher Townsend.....	11
Fiona Hall.....	11
Deborah Hart .....	12
Anthea Callen .....	13
Angus Trumble .....	13
Floor talks .....	14
Film <i>Amour</i> (2012) .....	14

## Places to eat on ANU Campus, Day one, Friday 19 September.

### Cafés listed and an estimated walking time to lecture theatre

- Hedley Bull Centre, corner of Liversidge and Garran Rd – 3 min walk
- Fellows Bar and Café, University House, corner of Liversidge and Garran Rd (other side of Hedley Bull) – 4 min walk
- CHATS Café and Restaurant ground floor, near the ANU School of Art Gallery (Ellery Cres side) – 10 min walk
- Biginelli's, School of Music, building 100, level 5 (Childers Street side) – 15min walk
- The Street Theatre Café, 15 Childers Street, Acton – 20 min walk

There are many other cafes, restaurants and bars in the ANU vicinity including New Acton. More information can be found at [anu.edu.au](http://anu.edu.au) or lost on campus application <http://lostoncampus.com.au/anu/main>

## Places to eat at the NGA, Day 2, Saturday 20 September

- Gallery Café. Open 10am – 4.30 pm daily
- The Street Café. Open 8.00am – 2.00pm (weather depending)
- Members' Lounge. Open 10.00am – 2.30pm (check closing times as they may vary in afternoon)



## Art and Mortality Symposium | Program at a glance

<b>DAY ONE: FRIDAY 19 SEPTEMBER</b> SIR ROLAND WILSON BUILDING, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, ROOM 1.02		
8:30am – 9:00am	Registration	
9:00am – 9.30am	Opening Welcome: Professor Paul Pickering & Professor Helen Ennis	
9:30am – 10:30am	Keynote presentation	Anne Noble, <i>In My Father's Garden</i>
10:30am – 11:00am	Morning Tea	
11:00am – 12:30pm	Session One <i>Staging death</i>	Rebecca Scott Bray Joanna Gilmour Patrick Pound
12:30pm – 2:00pm	Lunch - nearby locations to buy lunch listed on page 3.	
2:00pm – 3:30pm	Session Two <i>The present and absent body</i>	Elspeth Pitt Victoria Perrin Katrin Koenning
3:30pm – 4:00pm	Afternoon Tea	
4:00pm – 5:00pm	Session Three	Geoffrey Batchen, <i>Fiat Lux: Photography and Faith</i>
5:00pm – 6:00pm	Refreshments	
6:00pm – 7:30pm	Film Screening <i>Tender</i> (2013) 75 min	introduced by Lynette Wallworth, Director
<b>DAY TWO: SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER</b> JAMES O FAIRFAX LECTURE THEATRE, NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA		
9:00 am	Gallery will open for registered symposium guests	
10:00am – 10:15am	Welcome: Mark Van Veen and Helen Ennis	
10:15am – 11:15am	Keynote presentation	Christopher Townsend, <i>Death's ☺ Face: The Faces of Death in 1990s Art and Popular Culture</i>
11:15am – 11: 45am	Session Four	Fiona Hall
11:45am – 12:30pm	Session Five	Deborah Hart, <i>Arthur Boyd: Agony and Ecstasy</i>
12:30pm – 1:30pm	Lunch break and viewing of exhibition <i>Arthur Boyd: Agony and Ecstasy</i> (discounted tickets for registered guests)	
1:30pm – 2:45pm	Session Six <i>Symbolising death</i>	Anthea Callen Angus Trumble
2:45pm – 3:15pm	Afternoon tea in the Gandel Hall	
3:15pm – 4:45pm	Floor talks: NGA Collection program discussions (details on page XX)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eilidh Gilrithie ☐ <i>Mark Rothko, 1957 #20</i> (1957)</li> <li>Franchesca Cubillo ☐ <i>The Aboriginal Memorial</i> (1988)</li> <li>Frances Wild ☐ Montien Boonma, <i>Temple of the Mind, Sala for the mind</i> (1995)</li> <li>Roger Butler – Robert Dowling, <i>Mrs Adolphus Scealess with Black Jimmie on Merrang Station</i> (1856)</li> <li>Margie Kevin – works by Joy Hester</li> <li>Helen Ennis and Anne O'Hehir – photographs in the Collection Study Room</li> <li>Magdalene Keaney and eX de Medici – <i>Blue (Bower/Bauer)</i> (1998-2000)</li> </ul>	
4:45pm – 7:00pm	Film Screening <i>Amour</i> (2012) M, 127 min	

## Speakers' Abstracts & Bios: Day 1 – Friday 19 September 2014

### Sir Roland Wilson Building: Australian National University

Welcome: 9:00 – 9:30am



#### Professor Paul Pickering

**Professor Paul Pickering** is Director at the Research School of Humanities and the Arts. Prior to taking up this post he was Deputy Director (2010-13), Director of Graduate Studies (2004-9) and a Queen Elizabeth II Fellow at the Humanities Research Centre (2000-4). He was the Convenor of Graduate Studies in History (2002-6) and Interdisciplinary and Cross Cultural Research (2007-13). He was inaugural Director of the ANU Centre for European Studies in 2010-11. Paul is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, a member of the Board of the Australian Dictionary of Biography, co-editor of the Enlightenment World Series, the Editorial Board of the Journal of Victorian Culture and Editor of Humanities Research. In 2012 he was the recipient of the Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Supervision. His books include *Chartism and the Chartists in Manchester and Salford* (1995); *The People's Bread: A History of the Anti-Corn Law League* (2000) (with Alex Tyrrell); *Friends of the People: Uneasy Radicals in the Age of the Chartists* (London, 2003); *Contested Sites: Commemoration, Memorial and Popular Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (2004) and *Unrespectable Radicals? Popular Politics in the Age of Reform* (2007). Paul's most recent books are *Feargus O'Connor: A Political Life* (2008) and *Historical Reenactment: From Realism to the Affective Turn* (2010). His articles have been published by leading journals, both in Australian and overseas. He has also contributed to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, the Dictionary of Labour Biography and numerous book chapters. In 2013 he was awarded an Andrew Mellon Research Fellowship at the Huntington Library in California, a Vice Chancellor's Research Fellowship at Newcastle University in England and a Visiting Research Fellowship at St. Andrews in Scotland. Paul is currently writing a book (with Kate Bowan) as part of an ARC-funded Discovery project on politics and music in the Anglophone World, 1790 - 1914. The book will be published by Manchester University Press in 2014.



#### Professor Helen Ennis,

**Professor Helen Ennis** is the Sir William Dobell Chair of Art History and Director of the Centre for Art History and Art Theory, ANU School of Art. Helen is also Convenor of the Graduate Research Program. She specialises in Australian photographic history and is concerned with finding new ways of thinking, curating and writing about photographs. As an independent curator and writer she works closely with national cultural institutions. Major research projects include *In a New Light: Photography and Australia 1850s-2000* (2003-04), *Margaret Michaelis: Love, Loss and Photography* (2005) and *Reveries: Photography and Mortality* (2007). Her book *Photography and Australia* was published by Reaktion, London in 2007 and her most recent book *Wolfgang Sievers* was published in 2011. Helen curated *Things: Photographing the constructed world* for the National Library in 2012-13. She is currently writing a biography on Australian photographer Olive Cotton, supported by the Peter Blazey Fellowship and funding from the Australia Council Literature Board. In 2013 Helen was awarded the inaugural *Australian Book Review* George Hicks Foundation Fellowship. Helen also researches in the areas of biography, death studies, museology and curatorship.

**The Sir William Dobell Chair of Art History** was established in 1982 to honour the celebrated Australian artist, Sir William Dobell. This is a high profile position awarded to a scholar who is both a leader in teaching and research roles in the Visual Arts. This Chair continues to build and we would welcome donations from those wishing to support scholarship Visual Arts at ANU. More information about how you can support this position can be found at the following URL: <http://philanthropy.anu.edu.au/philanthropy/donate-online/search/?cause=sir-william-dobell-chair-of-art-history>

## Keynote speaker: 9:30 – 10:30am



### **Anne Noble:** *In My Father's Garden*

My father died in 1999. He fell over in the garden pruning a tree and his heart stopped soon after. When my mother called, without thinking I picked up my camera and drove 250 kilometres to see him. During the two weeks after he died, and again a year later when the family gathered to scatter his ashes, I photographed, making a decision to stay with the physical body of my father and to photograph until I could see him no more. While attending to the appearance of his death I also became curious about the culturally constructed, artificial moments of closure that hid the body from view during its passage from the house to the funeral parlour and then to the crematorium. Two years later, while considering the cultural denial of the visual in the experience of death, I realized that the photographs I had made were an indelible visual record that had organised itself internally as an archive or storehouse of memories of my father's body, of the surfaces of the world that he inhabited, and my journey alongside his from a physical presence to an invisible one. This project found its way into the public domain, in part to address the importance of the visual in the grieving process, while reflecting on photography's unique capacity to create and reconstitute the function of memory itself. In this presentation I will reflect on the photographic pursuit of the last sight of my father's body, the ethical dilemmas of turning the intimate experience of the death of a parent into an artwork and the many challenges encountered along the way.

**Anne Noble is Distinguished Professor** of Fine Arts at Massey University, Wellington. She is one of New Zealand's leading photographers, producing comprehensive series of work, spanning landscape, documentary and installation incorporating still and moving image. The subject of a major national retrospective that toured New Zealand 2001 – 2003, her work has featured in exhibitions at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein in Berlin, the Patio Herreriano in Spain, the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne, and the Queensland Gallery of Contemporary Art. In 2009 she received an Arts Foundation Laureate Award in recognition of her contribution to the visual arts in New Zealand. In 2014 she was awarded a Fulbright Senior Scholar award and has been based at Columbia College Chicago as their International Artist in Residence.

## Session one | *Staging Death*: 11:00am – 12:30pm



### **Rebecca Scott Bray:** *Crime as Art: Medico-Legal and Forensic Aesthetics*

Artists who work in the aftermath of fatal violence signal attempts to negotiate its effects outside the normative order of law, and often engage with the juridical as a site of failure and insufficiency. Artists are actively engaged in the production and destabilisation of meaning around death because, at the same time that law rouses post-violence, aesthetics too is often at play. Consequently, artists routinely turn crime's subject matter, artifacts and remnants into art and numerous artists have been motivated by crime, traversing crime scenes, mortuaries or massacre sites to make art from their encounters. As such, there exists huge diversity in crime's art, with some artists disgorging forensic archives and privileging historic police photographs, others adopting forensic tropes of earlier pictures and police techniques to represent death scenes, others attending crimes scenes both recent and long past to drive home crime's resonance, still others concentrating on crime's miscellany to interrogate what matters. A further strand to crime's art of interest to this paper involves the artist who is a forensic practitioner and explicitly draws on this affiliation to create artworks. This paper asks, when forensic objects and subjects become art and *not evidence*, what is offered by the aesthetic encounter with fatal violence?

**Dr Rebecca Scott Bray** is Co-Director, Institute of Criminology, Sydney Law School, and Senior Lecturer in Socio-Legal Studies, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Sydney. Her research interests lie at the intersections of law, criminology and culture, with a specific focus on issues around the dead. Areas include medico-legal and forensic criminology, photography, art and aesthetics, and coronial law and practice. She has published in journals such as *South Atlantic Quarterly*, *Journal of Law and Society* and *Griffith Law Review*. Her monograph *Crime Scenes: Forensics and Aesthetics* is forthcoming from Routledge-Cavendish.

## Session one continued...



### **Joanna Gilmour:** *Marketing darkness: death masks and posthumous portraiture in nineteenth-century Australia*

The exploits of Alexander Pearce, Ned Kelly, Captain Moonlight and other notorious criminal figures seem to retain a grip on the Australian imagination, as do the curious and often disturbing attitudes and practices which determined that the creation, display and circulation of images of such figures – typically posthumous – was suitable and acceptable. Considering a selection of death masks, drawings, prints, and photographs, this paper will look at the traditions and uses of posthumous portraiture as applied to criminals in Australia throughout the nineteenth century, from Thomas Bock's studies of executed Tasmanian convicts, made in Hobart in the 1820s, to the death masks of Kelly and his contemporaries made in the latter decades of the nineteenth-century.

This paper will also discuss the currency of and fascination with phrenology in this era, as well as the sideshow sensibility that sustained such 'amusements' as wax museums and a healthy trade in souvenir images of the feared, reviled and notorious. Drawn from research for an upcoming National Portrait Gallery exhibition, this presentation will also consider the social conditions characterising Australian communities in the colonial and pre-Federation eras, and touch on what the various forms of posthumous portraiture might reveal about class, culture, society and identity.

**Joanna Gilmour** is Curator at the National Portrait Gallery of Australia and a PhD candidate at the ANU School of Art's Centre for Art History and Art Theory. Her previous exhibitions and publications include *Husbands & Wives* (2010); *Indecent exposure: Annette Kellerman* (2011); and *Elegance in exile: portrait drawings from colonial Australia* (2012). Her exhibition *The Wax Museum* – looking at death masks, posthumous portraits and other late nineteenth century representations of Australian criminals – will open at the National Portrait Gallery in December 2015. Joanna is creating a new blog about her research: <http://whatjoannalooksat.wordpress.com/>



### **Patrick Pound:** *The afterlife of found photographs*

The world is scattered with unhinged vernacular snaps. EBay is a giant and ever-changing album of examples for sale. Each of these photos is past its original use. Found photographs are at once replete with life and hearsed in death. Adding to this, the analogue vernacular snap is itself a type of photography that is essentially past its use-by date. If photography is the medium of record, what are we to make of these recently redundant records? Do they capture Benjamin's idea of the dialectic at a standstill or just mum in her pyjamas? They concertina time and make trouble for it — and us. This paper will look at what might be made of found photographs: what meanings might be gleaned from them, and what we might find in the accumulation of details. We will closely look at examples that press the limits of photographic representation as if on a dare.

**Patrick Pound** is a Melbourne-based artist working across mediums. His work is about compiling and constructing evidence, posing the world as a puzzle and finding meaning in the accumulation of things. His photographic installation *People who look dead but (probably) aren't*, 2011-14, was recently shown at Stills Gallery, Sydney. Pound was included in *Melbourne Now*, 2013-14. His work is held in numerous public and private collections including the National Gallery of Australia, the NGV, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Museum of New Zealand, Auckland Art Gallery, and the Dunedin Art Gallery.



**Elspeth Pitt:** *For as long as possible: life and death in the work of Mike Parr*

In his seminal film *Hold your breath for as long as possible...* (1972) Australian performance artist Mike Parr starves himself of oxygen for as long as he is able to. Writhing and shuddering, his body, finally, forces him to draw breath. The work of Mike Parr shows us how doggedly the body avails itself to living. Its mechanisms compel one to breathe, eat, drink and to sleep, actions that unerringly sustain life. Mike Parr shows life as an obstinate phenomenon, not a delicate one, and as an occurrence that clings to the earth for as long as it can.

This paper uses Mike Parr's early performance work as a starting point from which to launch a more sustained discussion of life, death and the intersections between them as evidenced in his art. It will consider death not only as a physical experience and necessary end of corporeal existence, but also as an artistic pursuit; from the 'death of painting' and its necessary transformation as prefigured by the rise of conceptual art (*Terminal painting*, 1970); to the effort of the poet to outwit death by arranging words in eternal sequences (*Word situations* 1971); to the unforeseen outcomes of performances in which dreams bring, for a moment, a brother back to life (*Dream 1*, 1978).

**Elspeth Pitt**, Acting Curator, Australian Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery of Australia, is currently examining the work of Mike Parr. She has previously held research and curatorial positions at the Victoria & Albert Museum, the British Museum (as the Harold Wright Scholar) and the Art Gallery of South Australia.



**Victoria Perrin:**

*Eulogies are for the living – Hertha Kluge-Pott's portraits Man and Woman*

When academic Hans Pott died in 2012, his wife, the printmaker Hertha Kluge-Pott made a portrait of him, then a portrait of herself. The resulting works, titled *Man* and *Woman*, arrest their marriage at this most inaccessible moment. *Man*, as a portrait, is straight-forward. Not quite life-sized, it is vibrant but neither grand nor tragic. *Woman* is required, as the second half of the diptych, to turn this homage into an exploration of loss. Both originally from Germany,

Hertha and Hans emigrated to Melbourne in the post-war period. Their accomplishments in Australia were far-reaching across a number of fields. Hans taught German philosophy and cultural studies at the University of Melbourne, and Kluge-Pott was an influential art teacher for 34 years, while tenaciously continuing to make her unusual and expressive prints.

In Germany, the artist's youthful passions were for bold figures of the German Expressionists, and Käthe Kollwitz's penetrating self-portraits. Her Australian work moved away from the figure. Although she was precisely in the centre of the print-making boom, Kluge-Pott felt an artistic outcast. She began making work about the Australian landscape which was entirely removed from the 'Australian Landscape tradition'. While Kluge-Pott's landscape works are full of 'portraits' – portraits of sand-dunes, insects and plants – Hans' death brought her unambiguously back to the portrait figure, and self-portraiture. This deeply personal subject saw her summon the directness of German modernism once again. My discussion of *Man* and *Woman* will contextualise Kluge-Pott as an important Australian printmaker with reference to German philosophy and depictions of death in the German graphic tradition.

**Victoria Perrin** is an Honours graduate of ANU; she completed her Honours thesis in 2012 on the printmaker-sculptor George Baldessin. In 2013 she was the Gordon Darling Intern in the Australian Prints and Drawings Department of the National Gallery of Australia where she has catalogued the entire collection of Hertha Kluge-Pott's prints.



## Session two continued...



### **Katrin Koenning: *Dear Chris – A Narrative against an absolute Absence***

On the 5th of August 2010, at twenty-nine years of age, Chris ended his own life. Husband to Alana, my cousin, he was family. His death came a year after he had attempted suicide in one of the grand state forests of his native Queensland. I'm not sure when exactly his depression first showed its face; I never knew him to be any other way. Highly intelligent, he was trapped within himself, a cage with no apparent way out. He fought for years.

In my presentation I discuss the theoretical, practical and methodological details of *Dear Chris*, a non-linear, multi-layered photo-media work about the life and death of Chris. In seeking to understand the complexities of *is* and *was*, the work navigates through states of presence and absence.

*Dear Chris* examines the significance of addressing silences, and the idea of shared wounds as a basis for a more profoundly shared humanity. Through the engagement with memory as a lived experience, *Dear Chris* is concerned with the connection between loss, ritual and ways of remembering. I will present three interchangeable visual 'chapters' underpinning the work and discuss their functionality, separateness, and interconnectedness. These chapters are comprised of vernacular pictures from Chris' childhood album, photographs of places of significance to him, and photographs of some of his objects kept by Alana. Further I will discuss how the left-behind objects form a narrative element that re-negotiates an absolute absence.

**Katrin Koenning** is a Melbourne-based artist whose series *Dear Chris* was exhibited at the Edmund Pearce Gallery in 2013. She regularly exhibits nationally and internationally, and her work has been shown at renowned festivals such as the New York Photo Festival, Noorderlicht, Delhi Photo Fest, FORMAT, HeadOn and Voies Off. Katrin's images have been published in *Hijacked III: AUS / UK*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *GUP Magazine*, *Der Spiegel* and elsewhere. She has won a number of awards, including the 2012 Annual JGS Award by the Forward Thinking Museum. Katrin is a former Editor of *Australian PhotoJournalist Magazine*.

## Session three: 4:00 – 5:00pm



### **Geoffrey Batchen: *Fiat Lux ~ Photography and Faith***

Photographs have long been associated with death: to be photographed is to be set in the past, fixed like a stiffened corpse in some former time and place. Looking at a variety of photographic practices, this paper will seek to complicate this view, suggesting that photography in fact suspends its subjects somewhere between life and death, without ever quite fully embracing either state of being. It is this ambivalence that makes the photographic experience such a compelling one. We submit ourselves to photography to achieve this suspension and deny the possibility of death, to stop time in its tracks and us with it. But this

promise of immortality comes at a price—the suppression of our critical faculties, the surrender of those faculties to faith. We are asked to adopt a belief in the capacities of photography that chooses to overlook its various artifices in the interests of securing for ourselves a life everlasting. My contribution will therefore consider the history of photography as a faith-based discourse.

**Professor Geoffrey Batchen** teaches art history at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand, specializing in the history of photography. His books include *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography* (1997), *Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History* (2001), *Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance* (2004), *William Henry Fox Talbot* (2008) and *Suspending Time: Life, Photography, Death* (2010). He has also edited *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida* (2009) and co-edited *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis* (2012).

## Refreshments: 5pm – 6pm

## Film Screening | *Tender* (2012), 73 min: 6:00 – 7:30pm



**Lynette Wallworth** introducing her documentary film, *Tender*.

At the conclusion of the film screening, Lynette will be available to sign copies of her film which have been made available to purchase by Ronin Films. They will be located at the exit door.

*Tender* is the story of one community teaching itself how to be as present in death as we have learnt to become in birth. They are not trained or equipped but they are willing to learn and what they learn they share throughout this film during which one of their most loved members is diagnosed with lung cancer. As they struggle to take on the responsibility of end of life with dignity, humour and care, they do so with the imminent understanding that their friend Nigel is probably about to die. These two realities converge in *Tender* and they are a revelation in the power of community spirit.

This film, *Tender*, is the gift of the knowledge they gained and as such it is something we can all learn from. I didn't know the community well when I began filming, I knew only my friend Jen, but I learnt to see why she loves them and why they, of all people, would grasp this nettle and hold on tight. And I came to know the very softly spoken Nigel who quietly placed himself at the heart of the film and let the camera keep rolling. He let us stay because he thought this subject mattered to everyone, and he was right. *Tender* is his legacy and our learning; his wish would be that its fire and incentive would help bring about change in how we all engage with the farewelling at the end of life.

**Lynette Wallworth** is a visual artist whose video art installations have been shown at venues around the world including the Lincoln Centre in New York, the Smithsonian, London's BFI South Bank as well as film and art festivals across Europe. She has twice shown at the Sundance Film Festival; *Coral* was one of the hottest tickets going for the festival in 2013. *Tender* is her first documentary film. It is a natural extension of Lynette's previous works that deal with loss and resilience, most notably with *Evolution of Fearlessness*, which was selected to show at the Aung San Suu Kyi curated Brighton Festival in 2011. *Tender* deals with similar themes of grief and hope, however, the setting revolves around a small community. Like all of Lynette's previous works there is a commitment to emotional realness in front of the camera borne from a relationship of mutual respect, trust and humour. There is a deep intimacy inside the work as well as a painstaking attention to the solace of beauty held in each frame.



### ***Tender*: the ultimate act of love**

A documentary written & directed by **Lynette Wallworth**

Produced by **Kath Shelper**

Director of Photography, **Simon Morris**

Editor, **Karryn de Cinque**

Sound Designer, **Liam Egan**

Scarlett Pictures: [info@scarlettpictures.com.au](mailto:info@scarlettpictures.com.au) (02) 8333 9090

A Hive Fund Film, produced with the assistance of the Adelaide Film Festival, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the Australia Council for the Arts and Screen NSW. Scarlett Pictures acknowledges the support of Screen Australia's Enterprise Program.

**The Port Kembla Community Project Inc (PKCP)** is a not-for-profit organisation that operates in the Port Kembla Community Centre set up to empower its local community with a variety of services that contribute to more sustainable living. Their ethos is to harness the skills, talents and diversity of its community by giving people the chance to be supported, to create and to participate fully in transformative living. Some of their services include non-interest loans for low-income earners, intergenerational unemployment reduction, and of course, the not-for-profit funeral service. This project is managed by Jenny Briscoe-Hough and a team of twelve dedicated staff, and an ongoing support network of Port Kembla volunteers. To find out more about the PKCP or to donate to their tireless cause, please visit their official website: <http://www.pkcp.org.au/>

## Speakers' Abstracts & Bios: Day 2 – Saturday 20 September 2014

### James O Fairfax Theatre, National Gallery of Australia

#### Welcome: 10 – 10:15am

**Mark Van Veen**, Manager of Education and Public Programs, National Gallery of Australia.

**Professor Helen Ennis**, Director, Center for Art History and Art Theory, ANU School of Art.

#### Keynote speaker: 10:15 – 11:15am



#### **Christopher Townsend:** *Death's ☺ Face: The Faces of Death in 1990s Art and Popular Culture*

Starting from the central figure in Neil Gaiman's comic book *Death – The High Cost of Living* (1993), this paper examines ways in which art and popular culture in the 1990s and 2000s created different faces, and heads, for death. Starting from personal experience, and then entering into a more objective argument, the paper attends to two central works of the YBA (Young British Art) movement, Damien Hirst's *A Thousand Years* (1990) and Jake & Dinos Chapman's *Hell* (1998), as differing ways of treating the impersonal nature of death in the late 20th century, and contrasts them with a narcissistic rearticulation of the epitaphic tradition in Tracey Emin's *Uncle Colin* (1993) in which death assumes a reanimating role for the survivor. The paper uses these works to examine cultural responses to death in the wake of an historical catastrophe, World War II and the Holocaust, in which all other catastrophes appear to be mere aftershocks.

Portrait photo: (detail) © Becky Beasley

**Christopher Townsend** is Professor of the History of Avant-Garde Film in the department of Media Arts, Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author of several monographs and edited collections on contemporary and 20th century art, including *The Art of Tracey Emin* (2003, with Mandy Merck), *The Art of Rachel Whiteread*, (2004) and most pertinently, *Art and Death* (2008). He is currently finishing a monograph on *Modernism and Death* for publication in 2016.

#### Session four: 11:15 – 11:45am



#### **Fiona Hall:** *Skulls and vanitas*

The skull is a recurring motif in Fiona Hall's art and was featured in her most recent work *Out of my tree* shown at the Adelaide Biennial of Art in 2014. Her use of skulls relates to the *vanitas* tradition in western art in which specific objects symbolise the transience of earthly life and inevitability of death. Hall extends a preoccupation with death to encompass concerns about the state of the environment and the plight of endangered species. In her own words, her art is a 'carrion call, sounding the siren in a dying wilderness'.

**Fiona Hall, AO**, is one of Australia's best known contemporary artists. She has been exhibiting her work since the 1970s and is representing Australia at the 2015 Venice Biennale. Her retrospective exhibition, *Fiona Hall: Big Game Hunting*, curated by Kendrah Morgan, was held at Heide Museum of Modern Art in 2013. Julie Ewington's monograph on Hall was published by Piper Press in 2005. Fiona lives and works in Adelaide.

## Session five: 11:45am – 12:35pm



### Deborah Hart: *Arthur Boyd: Love, Loss and Reclamation*

Mortality is a recurring preoccupation in Boyd's art across diverse media, interweaving personal, familial and social concerns. His imagination was ignited as a child by stories read to him by his grandmother, Emma Minnie Boyd, from a large, illustrated Bible that included graphic images of mortality. Feelings engendered by these images were transmuted into works undertaken during Second World War and informed his *Nebuchadnezzar* works painted in the volatile climate of 1968.

Another vital and less well-recognised presence in Boyd's art and thinking was his maternal grandmother, Evelyn Gough, a feminist, social reformer and pacifist whose interest in Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science informed his upbringing. His *Lysistrata* etchings of strong women averting war, in part echo his grandmother's views. Some four decades after 'Granny Gough's' death, his discovery of a poem she had published in 1928, *Bert Hinkler: The homing bird of Bundaberg*, sparked his memories of her and resulted in a number of intriguing paintings and prints in the 1970s.

A sense of loss and the reclamation of memory was also poignantly expressed in relation to his father, Merric, one of the first studio potters in Australia who was also drew prolifically. In 1968, after a visit back to family haunts of his childhood, Boyd embarked on a group of extraordinary, exploratory memory drawings, calling up ghosts of the past. These works, along with others, reveal his persistent yet diverse responses to the interwoven subjects of love and death.

**Dr Deborah Hart** is Senior Curator of Australian Paintings and Sculpture post-1920 at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra, a position she has held since 2000. Prior to her appointment, she worked for state and regional galleries in Australia and as a freelance curator. Dr Hart is a widely published art historian and has written several acclaimed monographs. She has curated numerous exhibitions at the National Gallery, including *Fred Williams: infinite horizons*, *Joy Hester and friends*, *Grace Cossington Smith: a retrospective*, *Imants Tillers: one world many visions*, *Andy and Oz: parallel visions* (shown at the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, 2007) and *Richard Larter: a retrospective*. She is curator of the *Arthur Boyd: agony and ecstasy* exhibition.

## ARTHUR BOYD

AGONY & ECSTASY

Registered guests for the *Art and Mortality* Symposium will receive a discounted entry price to the exhibition *Arthur Boyd: Agony and Ecstasy*.

### 5 SEP – 9 NOV: EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

#### Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 September 2.00 pm

Concert: House on fire

Inspired by the imaginative worlds of Arthur Boyd, The Griffin Ensemble team up with Canberra pop-duo The Cashews to present a program of original music and multimedia exploring what it means to belong to the Australian landscape.

\$40, \$35 members, \$20 under 30 years, \$10 under 18 years | Gandel Hall Bookings at <http://griffyn.iwannaticket.com.au>

#### Sunday 5 October 2.00pm

Boyd and his generation: a tribute in poetry

Well-loved Australian poetry selected and performed by local Canberra poets in response to the art of Arthur Boyd. Enjoy refreshments and Q+A with the poets afterwards.

\$20, \$15 members/concession | Gandel Hall

#### Saturday 11 October 9.00am – 4.00pm

Radical visionary: Arthur Boyd

A one-day symposium in which experts delve into the life and work of radical visionary Arthur Boyd. Speakers include Patrick McCaughey, Dr Deborah Hart, Dr Grazia Gunn, Dr Mary Eagle, Darleen Bungey, Margaret Pont and Grace Cochrane AM. Light lunch and exhibition entry included.

\$60, \$55 members/concession | James O Fairfax Theatre

#### Friday 31 October 7.00 pm

Invocations: eight meditations on paintings by Arthur Boyd

A program of music illuminating the visionary art of Arthur Boyd, directed by Chris Latham and featuring Canberra's finest performers, including Louise Page (soprano), Alan Hicks (piano), David Pereira (cello) and the Sculthorpe String Quartet.

Program and more information at [nga.gov.au/Boyd/Invocations](http://nga.gov.au/Boyd/Invocations)  
\$45, \$40 members/concession | James O Fairfax Theatre

Plus a number of FREE lunchtime talks focusing on different aspects of the exhibition.

For more information and event bookings go to [nga.gov.au/calendar](http://nga.gov.au/calendar)

## Session six | Symbolising death: 1:30 – 2:45pm



### **Anthea Callen:** *Death and the Surgeon's Art*

This presentation considers the art of Scottish surgeon-anatomist Charles Bell (1774-1842) who, with his elder brother John (1763-1820), was renowned both as a surgeon-anatomist and as an artist; together Bell and his brother taught anatomy and illustrated and published two volumes of *A System of Dissection Explaining the Anatomy of the Human Body*. The brief here is to consider some of Charles Bell's watercolours made while a trauma surgeon during the Napoleonic wars and famously documenting his experiences at Waterloo in 1815, where the anatomist Robert Knox commented very negatively on Bell's surgical abilities (the mortality rate of amputations carried out by Bell ran at about 90%). Outcomes for some of Bell's surgery patients were recorded, for others mystery remains. My particular interest here is in the visual record from a medical perspective of a violently injured live person at risk of imminent demise: does the surgeon draw rather than treat the patient? Is what Bell makes 'art' or a realistic medical record? What mediates his view? How do we assess aesthetics/ethics of representing a real person frozen in the moment between life and death?

**Anthea Callen** was until recently Professor of Art (Practice-led Research) at ANU School of Art and is Emeritus Professor of Visual Culture at the University of Nottingham (UK). Callen is a specialist in the history of painters' materials and techniques. She has also published widely on visual cultures of the body, science and medicine in Europe, on which a new book, *Doubles and Desire: Art, Anatomy and Masculinity 1800-1914* is in the final stages of preparation for Yale University Press. Her latest book, *The Work of Art: Plein air painting and artistic identity in nineteenth-century France*, will be published by Reaktion in October 2014.



### **Angus Trumble:** *The Death of the Year by Charles Sims, and the Rhythm of Time in Edwardian Britain*

*The Death of the Year* was painted in about 1912 in his studio at Fittleworth, West Sussex, by the then successful but nowadays generally underappreciated painter Charles Sims. His subject was a poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley entitled "Dirge for the Year" (written in 1821 and first published in 1824). Sims's painting represents a young woman lying embedded in a snowdrift, her hands joined in prayer like a tomb effigy. A naked infant sits at her feet, while a vaguely threatening spinney is partly visible through the surrounding gloom. Upward of twenty-two burning candles hover in mid-air above, as if borne by some silent chorus of spectral attendants. The picture is, in fact, a poetical rumination on a snippet of calendar time, with a strong hint towards New Thought and spiritualism. It would appear to anticipate the despair that eventually consumed the artist following the death of his son on the Western Front in the earliest stage of the Great War, but its most powerful resonance is above all with the accelerating rhythm of time, one of the defining characteristics of the art of Edwardian Britain.

Portrait (detail) courtesy of Andrew Cowen.

**Angus Trumble** is a graduate of University of Melbourne and of New York University's Institute of Fine Arts. He was Curator of European Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia in Adelaide from 1996 to 2001 and was Senior Curator of Paintings and Sculpture at the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, Connecticut, from 2003 to 2014. He took up the appointment of Director of the National Portrait Gallery of Australia in February 2014. He is the author of *A Brief History of the Smile* (2003), and *The Finger: A Handbook* (2010), and his latest book (co-edited with Andrea Wolk Rager), *Edwardian Opulence: British Art at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century* (2013), was shortlisted for the Spears Book Awards in London. He is a regular contributor to *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Burlington Magazine*, *Paris Review*, *Esopus Magazine*, and *Australian Book Review*.

## Afternoon tea in the Gandel Hall: 2.45 – 3.15pm



## Floor Talks | NGA Collection: 3:15 – 4:45am

Floor talks will be arranged by NGA staff who will instruct you on how to register your name on the day. There will be opportunities to attend several talks in this session, however places are limited.

- Roger Butler – Robert Dowling, *Mrs Adolphus Scealess with Black Jimmie on Merrang Station* (1856)
- Adriane Boag – Robert Ryman, *Arena* (1977)
- Helen Ennis and Anne O’Hehir – photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe, Sebastiao Salgado and others in the Collection Study Room
- Eilidh Gilrithie – *Mark Rothko, 1957 #20* (1957)
- Magdalene Keaney and eX de Medici – *Blue (Bower/Bauer)* (1998-2000)
- Margie Kevin – works by Joy Hester
- Mirah Lambert – *The Aboriginal Memorial* (1988)
- Frances Wild – Montien Boonma, *Temple of the Mind, Sala for the mind* (1995)

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**Roger Butler**, Senior Curator, Australian Prints and Drawings, National Gallery of Australia, and author of numerous publications including *Printed: Images in Colonial Australia* and *Printed: Images by Australian Artists, 1885-1955*.

**Adriane Boag** is Program coordinator, Learning and Access, National Gallery of Australia. Adriane liaises closely with the community to deliver engaging public programs such as the NGA’s Art and Alzheimer Program

**Helen Ennis**, Sir William Dobell Chair of Art History and Director, Centre for Art History and Art Theory at the Australian National University, and author of *Reveries: Photography and Mortality*, 2008.

**Anne O’Hehir** is Curator, Photography at the National Gallery of Australia and has contributed to publications including *Carol Jerrems: photographic artist* and *In the spotlight: Anton Bruehl photographs 1920s–1950s*.

**Eilidh Gilrithie** is a second year medical student at the Australian National University. She is currently researching ideas and theories surrounding death and dying in works of art by Mark Rothko and Colin McCahon as part of a collaborative program between the NGA and ANU.

**Magdalene Keaney** is a PhD student at the ANU School of Art, Centre for Art History and Art Theory and was formerly Associate Curator of Photographs at the National Portrait Gallery, London.

**eX de Medici** is an Australian artist with a background as a tattooist and a specialisation in gouache and watercolour. Her work was presented in a survey exhibition at the Drill Hall Gallery in 2013 and she was included in the Adelaide Biennial in 2014.

**Margie Kevin** has worked as an Educator in the NGA in the Learning and Access section for the past 20 years and has recently been involved in delivering the Art Med program and the Art and Alzheimer programs.

**Mirah Lambert** is Manager of Learning Programs, National Gallery of Australia, and engages audiences with visual art and material culture in a range of education and public programs.

**Frances Wild** is Program Coordinator, Learning and Access. National Gallery of Australia, and coordinates the artmed program, a collaboration between the NGA and ANU Medical School.

## Film Screening | *Amour* (2012) commencing 4.45pm

***Amour* (2012)** 127 min, France. Director and Screenplay: Michael Haneke.

Georges and Anne are an octogenarian couple. They are cultivated, retired music teachers. Their daughter, also a musician, lives in Britain with her family. One day, Anne has a stroke, and the couple's bond of love is severely tested.