



Australian  
National  
University

## Symposium

# Portrayal and Identity

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra

Saturday 23 March 2013

9.30am-4.00pm

### *Program at a glance*

9:30am Registration and morning tea

### **Liangis Theatre**

10:00am Welcome and introduction: Gordon Bull

10:15am Professor Marcia Pointon

11:00am Jude Rae

11:30am Professor Anthea Callen

12:00pm Lunch (NPG café)

1:30pm Professor Colin Rhodes

2:00pm Dr Christopher Chapman

2:30pm Associate Professor Helen Ennis

### **Terrace Rooms**

3:00 – 4:00pm Champagne and canapés to celebrate the Australian book launch of **Professor Marcia Pointon's *Portrayal and the Search for Identity***, (London, Reaktion Books, 2013) **with a book signing by the author.**

Books available for purchase through Portrait Gallery Store at the launch

Saturday 23 March – National Portrait Gallery, Canberra	
9:30 – 9:55	Registration and morning tea
10:00 am Liangis theatre	<p><i>Welcome and introduction</i></p> <p><b>Gordon Bull</b> Head of School, ANU School of Art, College of Arts &amp; Social Sciences</p>
10:15 am Liangis theatre	<p><i>Portrayal and the search for identity</i></p> <p><b>Marcia Pointon</b> Senior Research Professor, Norwich University of the Arts.</p> <p><b>Marcia is a distinguished Art Historian, independent scholar and research consultant. She is also Professor Emeritus of History of Art, University of Manchester UK and Research Fellow at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London. The Australian launch of her most recent publication <i>Portrayal and the Search for Identity</i>, (Reaktion Books, 2013) will be held at the close of this symposium.</b></p> <p>Marcia Pointon investigates how we view and understand portraiture as a genre, and how portraits function as artworks within social and political networks. Likeness is never a straightforward matter as we rarely have the subject of a portrait as a point of comparison. Featuring familiar canonical portraits as well as little-known works, <i>Portrayal</i> seeks to unsettle notions of portraiture as an art of convention, a reassuring reflection of social realities. Readers are instead invited to consider how identity is produced pictorially, and where likeness is registered apart from in a face. In exploring these issues, the author addresses wide-ranging challenges, such as the construction of masculinity in dress, representations of slaves, and self-portraiture in relation to mortality.</p>
11:00 am Liangis theatre	<p><i>The Portrait Commission:</i> <i>Hired Guns, Bounty Hunters and Horse Whisperers</i></p> <p><b>Jude Rae</b> Painter</p> <p><b>Jude is a prominent contemporary painter based in Sydney. Her paintings are exhibited nationally and internationally, and are held in important major collections in both Australia and New Zealand, including the Australian National Portrait Gallery. She is the 2005 and 2008 winner of the Portia Geach Memorial Award, the most prestigious portraiture prize for female artists.</b></p> <p>The genre of portraiture carries a heavy social and historical freight. While the historical analysis of portraiture deals largely with the broadly social circumstances of its generation and reception, comparatively little has been written about the physical and inter-subjective dimensions of portraiture that take place in the painter's studio. Rae will offer a painter's account of the process of making a portrait on commission, a task which is approached from a number of angles ranging from the empirical to the subjective and much in between. Terms such as subjective and objective should be used in this instance with caution, however, as this practice, perhaps like that of psychoanalysis, exists in a realm where the metaphorical structures of Cartesian dualism are as much of a hindrance as a help.</p>

11:30 am  
Liangis theatre

### *Constructing the artist's identity*

**Anthea Callen**

**Professor of Art: Practice-led Research, ANU School of Art**

**Anthea is a scholar and a painter and is published extensively. She is also Professor Emeritus of Visual Culture at the University of Nottingham, UK. Her expertise in art history, visual culture and the gender politics of visual representation spans the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, notably on France and Britain. She is a renowned specialist in nineteenth-century artists' materials and techniques. Her most recent book chapter, on Seurat's drawings, appears in *Seurat Re-viewed* (ed. Paul Smith, 2010).**

Analysing selected nineteenth-century French painters' self-portraits, portraits of fellow-artists and images of artists' studios, Callen will discuss the emergence of notions of the modern artist's identity and the idea of creative 'work'. Particular attention will be given to the painter's touch and mark making: the modern artist's individuating 'signature'. Painting technique – the artist's gesture as well as materials and methods of paint application – will be seen as central both to modern art and the idea of the modern artist. Artists under the microscope will include Courbet, Cézanne and Pissarro. What do their painting methods and modes of self-representation tell us about the formation of modern artistic identity?

12:00 pm

**Lunch break**

1:30 pm  
Liangis theatre

### *Portraying the outsider: selfhood and the psychic elsewhere*

**Colin Rhodes**

**Dean and Professor of Art History & Theory, Sydney College of Arts.**

**Colin is an eminent writer, curator and historian. Researching 20th century and contemporary art history and theory, he has published and lectured widely on Modernism, especially Expressionism in its many forms, and Self-Taught and Outsider Art. He is currently completing an *Encyclopedia of Outsider Art* (Chicago University Press) and an edited volume on erotic outsider art for *Raw Vision*.**

Images of the self often recur in the loosely defined territory of Self-Taught and Outsider Art. The matter of selfhood and its portrayal is a crucial aspect of marginal practices, where artists wrestle with images of experiences which Surrealism labeled the 'psychic elsewhere'. The self in visual representation is never disinterested or merely pictorial; it is often driven by a need to communicate psychological, symbolic and political content. Self-images may be hallucinatory, as in the work of Anthony Mannix or Unica Zurn, or visionary (akin to Blake's *Ghost of a Flea*) or spiritual, as in the work of Joe Light, and at times almost abstract, as in the quasi-shamanic self-portraits of Raymond Morris. Many others are imaginative reinventions of self, whether redemptive or emancipatory, sublimating an intolerable mundanity. Although all the objects Rhodes discusses are produced outside the mainstream art world, they are not examined here as images of 'otherness', but as contributions to the search for identity through portrayal.

2:00 pm  
Liangis theatre

*Portraying masculinity*

**Dr Christopher Chapman**  
Senior Curator, National Portrait Gallery

Christopher is responsible for leading the Gallery's curatorial team to research, develop, present and interpret the National Portrait Gallery collection. In 2011 Christopher brought together portraits of the pioneers of psychology in Australia from World War I to the 1950s with the work of artists whose experiments with portraiture are driven by their fascination with the subconscious mind and intense mental states. Christopher was awarded his PhD from the Australian National University in 2007 for his thesis examining images of youth masculinity and themes of self-sacrifice in photography and film.

Consideration of the expression of gendered identity and selfhood is inherent to the exploration of portraiture. Artists have consistently used portraiture and portrait-related imagery to explore social and cultural expressions of selfhood. The representation of the self and others through portraiture can open up a space where a range of possible conceptions of gendered identity can be played out. To consider some contemporary explorations of masculine identity, Christopher will discuss photographic portrait-related work by selected male and female American artists working across recent decades. These images present formations of masculinity framed by intimacy. The images allude to complex and evolving states of identity: vulnerability in toughness and subtle emotional ranges of openness and guardedness. There are expressions of masculine identity characterised by quietude and pensiveness.

2.30pm  
Liangis theatre

*Diverging views: a portrait of Max Dupain*

**Helen Ennis**  
Associate Professor of Art History, Postgraduate Convener,  
ANU School of Art.

Helen is Australia's leading photography curator, historian and writer. Her book, *Margaret Michaelis: love, loss and photography* (NGA, 2005) won the 2006 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards, Nettie Palmer Prize for Non-fiction. She is currently the 2011 recipient of the *Peter Blazey Fellowship* for her forthcoming biography on Olive Cotton, and recently curated the exhibition *Things, photography the constructed world*, of over 250 photographs from the National Library of Australia collection (NLA, 24 Nov 2012- 17 Feb 2013).

There is a mystery surrounding one of the best known Australian modernist photographs, *Max after surfing*, 1937. Two prints exist, one by Olive Cotton, Max Dupain's partner at the time, and the other by eminent international photographer George Hoyningen-Huene, who briefly visited Australia in 1937. Helen will consider how issues of identity and authenticity are affected by the existence of variants and propose a range of scenarios involving the production of this compelling work.

3:00 – 4:00 pm  
Terrace rooms

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