conference highlights

department of anthropology

centre for research on social inclusion

the ethics & politics of engagement

9-11 December 2009

hosted by the department of anthropology of macquarie university

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http://www.anth.mq.edu.au/conf/

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the 2009 annual meeting of the australian anthropological society
From the Head of the Department of Anthropology

I extend a warm welcome to all participants, on my own behalf and that of all my colleagues, on the occasion of the 2009 Annual Conference of the Australian Anthropological Society. The Department is celebrating its fortieth anniversary, and the chosen theme, *The Ethics and Politics of Engagement*, reflects the new energy with which a re-configured department has come together in this decade, while at the same time renewing the founding vision of Professor Chandra Jayawardena, who fostered a politically engaged vision of cultural anthropology from the late 1960s. The vitality of the Department was reflected in the scholarship on migration and ethnicity, Aboriginal anthropology, social movements in South and South-East Asia and the Pacific, and the lively debates on Marxist and feminist anthropology that marked its history over three decades. Now, with new colleagues, the Department is branching in new directions. We can think of no better way to celebrate this anniversary than to welcome you to what promises to be an immensely stimulating conference, with a major event to bring us together each day. I warmly thank the keynote speakers for making these focal gatherings possible. And I wish to thank all my colleagues for their efforts. Special thanks to Greg Downey and Malcolm Haddon for their untiring labour in bringing together the diverse elements of this event, and to Jennifer Deger and Lisa Stefanoff for an enticing program of art, photography and film.

Kalpana Ram

Schedule in brief

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:00 Meeting of the TAJA board</td>
<td>E6A 108</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30 Welcome to Country</td>
<td>E7B Mason Theatre</td>
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<td>9:30-3:40 Film program</td>
<td>E6A Room 102</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30-11:00 Concurrent Session One</td>
<td>E5A-E6A Courtyard or E7B Colonnade (rain)</td>
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<td>11:00-11:30 Morning Tea</td>
<td>E5A-E6A Courtyard or E7B Colonnade (rain)</td>
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<td>11:30-1:00 Concurrent Session Two</td>
<td>E5A-E6A Courtyard or E7B Colonnade (rain)</td>
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<td>1:00-2:00 Lunch</td>
<td>Entry to E6A</td>
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<td>Poster exhibition</td>
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<td>2:00-3:30 Concurrent Session Three</td>
<td>E5A-E6A Courtyard or E7B Colonnade (rain)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30-4:00 Afternoon Tea</td>
<td>Macquarie Theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00-5:30 Keynote lecture by George Marcus</td>
<td>U@MQ (outdoor veranda, weather permitting)</td>
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<td>5:30-7:00 Welcome reception</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00-9:00 Opening of interventions art exhibition</td>
<td>E11A Art Gallery</td>
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Wednesday 9 December
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<tr>
<td>All day <em>interventions</em> exhibition and panels (Z 4-6)</td>
<td>E11A Art Gallery</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-10:30 Plenary One: An Anthropological Existence</td>
<td>E7B Mason Theatre</td>
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<td>10:30-11:00 Morning Tea</td>
<td>E5A-E6A Courtyard or E7B Colonnade (rain)</td>
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<td>11:00-12:30 Concurrent Session Four</td>
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<td>11:00-5:00 Film program</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-1:30 Lunch</td>
<td>E5A-E6A Courtyard or E7B Colonnade (rain)</td>
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<td>Claude Lévi-Strauss tribute</td>
<td>E7B Mason Theatre</td>
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<td>1:30-3:00 Concurrent Session Five</td>
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<td>3:00-3:30 Afternoon Tea</td>
<td>E5A-E6A Courtyard or E7B Colonnade (rain)</td>
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<td>3:30-5:00 Concurrent Session Six</td>
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<td>ANSA Annual General Meeting</td>
<td>E6A 133</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00-6:30 AAS Annual General Meeting</td>
<td>E7B Mason Theatre</td>
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<td>7:00- Conference Banquet</td>
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**Thursday 10 December**

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<tr>
<td>All day <em>interventions</em> exhibition</td>
<td>E11A Art Gallery</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-10:30 Plenary Two: Crisis of Culture</td>
<td>E7B Mason Theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00 Morning Tea</td>
<td>E5A-E6A Courtyard or E7B Colonnade (rain)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00-12:30 Concurrent Session Seven</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00-5:00 Film program</td>
<td>E6A Room 102</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-1:30 Lunch</td>
<td>E5A-E6A Courtyard or E7B Colonnade (rain)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heads of Departments Lunch</td>
<td>E6A 108</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30-3:00 Concurrent Session Eight</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00-3:30 Afternoon Tea</td>
<td>E5A-E6A Courtyard or E7B Colonnade (rain)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30-5:00 Concurrent Session Nine</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 AM Conference closes</td>
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**Friday 11 December**
George Marcus is Chancellor's Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Irvine, where he is also the founder of the Center for Ethnography. Prof. Marcus was formerly the Joseph D. Jamail Professor at Rice University, where he headed the Department of Anthropology for twenty-five years.

Prof. Marcus has been a leader in critical anthropology, the study of contemporary culture, and innovations in ethnographic research. He is author or co-author of such landmark works as *Writing Culture: The Politics and Poetics of Ethnography* (California, 1986), *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Movement in the Human Sciences* (Chicago, 1986), and *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin* (Princeton, 1998), and was the editor of the *Late Editions: Cultural Studies for the New Century* series with the University of Chicago Press. In addition, he was the founding editor of *Cultural Anthropology*, shepherding the journal in explorations of contemporary social theory and new frontiers of ethnography that made it one of the most influential in our discipline.

Since the 1980s, Prof. Marcus has helped to transform ethnography, proposing a role for the genre as cultural critique and encouraging generations of anthropologists to use ethnographic field methods to explore new areas and topics, such as communities of experts, diasporic groups, and even contemporary diffusion of corporate and other cultural forms. About his recent work, Prof. Marcus writes:

I am interested in how the marginal, incomplete, and belated specialty of the cultural/ethnographic study of elites in anthropology (subsuming the early projects of my career, in Tonga, on capitalist dynasties etc.) has become the means of pursuing an anthropology of contemporary change in most topical arenas. It is the necessity of working with experts and counterparts of various kinds as an orientation to fieldwork along with an abiding interest in the conditions of ordinary, often subaltern life that generates the complexities of multi-sited research about which I have written.

Prof. Marcus has argued passionately that collaboration and the treatment of our subjects as ‘counterparts’ can help to reinvigorate ethnography, and he has been actively involved in searching for alternative forms for producing, disseminating and debating ethnographic knowledge. For example, he recently collaborated with Paul Rabinow to produce the book, *Designs for an Anthropology of the Contemporary* (Duke, 2008), based on extended conversations that also included James Faubion and volume editor Tobias Rees, and, together with Faubion, edited the volume, *Fieldwork Is Not What It Used to Be: Learning Anthropology's Method in a Time of Transition* (Cornell, 2009). He has argued that the field has a new potential relevance in the contemporary moment, that ‘the most creative and novel thinking in anthropology is in its forms of knowing and engagement, its revisions and designing of research in the face of shifting forms of communication, new media, and the politics of doing ethnography.’
Keynote lecture:
The Politics of Ethnographic Designs In/Of Contemporary Fieldwork

There are kinds of conceptual work in the heart of doing fieldwork—speculative, at times contested thinking together with and against research subjects—that do not get well articulated in existing ethnographic publication, tales of fieldwork, or the kinds of reflexive discourses that have emerged as genre since the 1980s. I am interested in forms or designs of inquiry consistent with how fieldwork is communicated as a method in its professional anthropological traditions that might both stimulate such thinking and make it visible. The production of such forms in the midst of inquiry gives a particular meaning to 'engagement', 'politics', and finally 'ethics'. At the Center for Ethnography that I direct, these forms have been conceived as 'parasites', and I want to review our experience so far of trying to produce them in the midst of particular fieldwork projects.

Keynote lecture
Wednesday
9 December
4:00-5:30 pm
Macquarie Theatre

Special guest
John Simons
Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University

After Prof. Marcus’s keynote lecture, please join us on the east patio of the U@MQ building (C10A), for the Conference Welcome Reception. We will be welcoming all of our visitors and celebrating the launch of the interventions exhibition.

Guests will be invited to view the exhibition, housed in E11A, at any time during the Conference.

The reception will run from 5:30-7:00.

Djon Mundine OAM will speak at the exhibition opening in the Art Gallery (E11A) at 6:00 pm.
Michael Jackson is a graduate of the Universities of Auckland and Cambridge (UK), and has carried out ethnographic fieldwork in Sierra Leone and Aboriginal Australia. Originally from New Zealand, he is now Distinguished Visiting Professor of World Religions at the Harvard Divinity School. He has taught previously at Indiana University, Massey University, and the University of Copenhagen.


His books of poetry have earned him both the Commonwealth Poetry Prize and the New Zealand Book Award for Poetry. His latest book, *Life Within Limits: Wellbeing in a World of Want* (in press), draws on his most recent fieldwork in Sierra Leone to explore the existential and ethical implications of social inequality and insufficiency.

Prof. Jackson’s ethnographies have consistently sought to make thought answerable to the world – to show how reflection and research can engage with the everyday issues, exigencies and struggles that characterise human life in every society, irrespective of their historical and cultural differences. His innovations in writing ethnography reflect his determination to make anthropology speak directly to contemporary concerns and to reach an audience beyond the academy. Although his ethnographies capture diverse ways of being in exquisite detail, his distinctive theoretical sensitivity highlights the way that individuals in a variety of contexts struggle with shared existential, moral and ethical quandaries.

The organisers of the 2009 Australian Anthropology Society conference are pleased to be able to host a visit from Prof. Jackson and to invite other scholars to reflect on how his diverse and innovative body of work has affected their thinking in a variety of ways. As Jackson’s own memoir observes, ‘We do not own our own lives – we are not in sole possession of the truth about ourselves.’
Plenary panel:

'An Anthropological Existence': Conversations with Michael Jackson

Plenary panel

Thursday
10 December
9:00-10:30 am
E7B Mason Theatre

Panel Participants

Malcolm Haddon, Macquarie University
Althea Lambert, Auckland University of Technology
Chris Houston, Macquarie University
Simone Dennis, Australian National University
Greg Downey, Macquarie University

Each one of the panel participants will briefly address the work of Michael Jackson, his ethnography, theoretical texts, poetry, or fiction, in which he has articulated his distinctive humanist vision and style of anthropological thought. These presentations will be short ‘questions’.

Response

Michael Jackson, Harvard University

After the short presentations, Prof. Jackson will be given the opportunity to respond in any way he chooses, sharing his thoughts on the questions, his own impressions of the way his work has changed and how he seeks to further develop his contributions to anthropology over time.

Conversation

Finally, the floor will be opened for comments or questions from the conference delegates.
**Elizabeth A. Povinelli (Columbia University)**, *Goodbye Recognition, Hello Recognition.*

This paper places the ongoing Intervention in Aboriginal Affairs in a broader dynamic of the politics of cultural recognition. It seeks to demonstrate how and why practices of life, death, and stagnation are rewritten, felt, and promoted as liberty, vitality and progress. Critical to this discussion is an analysis of the tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance of social belonging and abandonment in late liberalism. Rather than understanding the Intervention as a break with the politics of cultural recognition, this paper argues that it is merely an internal movement within a broader liberal dynamic in which recognition and intervention are mere moments.

**Marcia Langton (University of Melbourne)** Let them eat ideology: The historical collapse of Aboriginal economies and the postcolonial dilemma of Australianist anthropology

A peculiar postcolonial dilemma has gripped the anthropological imagination in Australia, raising yet again the relevance and efficacy of the discipline in the context of extreme situations in which the state and its subalterns conflict. On the 17th of August 2007, in Australia, an extraordinary federal statute, the Northern Territory Emergency Intervention Act, became law in a jurisdiction where a significant majority of the population is indigenous and severely disadvantaged across all socio-economic indicators. The statute—with more than 500 pages of legislative provisions that subverted both self-government of the Northern Territory and the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)—authorised a multi billion dollar federal intervention in the Territory’s administration of indigenous affairs. More than a century of policy experimentation with Aboriginal people climaxed with the Commonwealth Government sending into the Northern Territory—the only jurisdiction where it has such broad powers—a special police taskforce, defence force troops and emergency medical staff; imposing restrictions on welfare income expenditure, on purchase of alcohol, pornography, and other measures.

Australian anthropologists have been debating these matters since August 2007, and this year, the debate reached a crescendo of vilification and bitterness. This acrimony was instigated by two matters: the alarm at the technical breach of the Racial Discrimination Act that results from the Intervention Act suspending its powers to enable the Intervention measures, and the publication of Peter Sutton’s book *The Politics of Suffering*, an incandescent account of deep-rooted Aboriginal cultural practices that contribute to the escalating rates of alcohol and drug abuse, violence against women and children, child neglect. The book also refutes—and herein lies the reason for the acrimony—the misconceptions and ideological positions held by anthropologists and the liberal consensus in the discipline that silences dissenters to the paradigm of traditionalism as panacea to modernity. This paper explores some of the explicit and implicit issues in this debate, and examines the contestation in anthropological circles of the nature of the situation of indigenous people.
Elizabeth Povinelli
Professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies at Columbia University where she has also been the Director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender and the Co-Director of the Centre for the Study of Law and Culture. She is author of *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality* (Duke University Press, 2006), *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (Duke University Press, 2002), and *Labor’s Lot: The Power, History and Culture of Aboriginal Action* (University of Chicago, 1994). Prof. Povinelli also is former editor of the journal, *Public Culture*, and has published widely on sexuality, gender and the legacy of colonialism.

Even before she had begun work on a graduate degree, Prof. Povinelli came to Australia on a study-abroad fellowship to the Northern Territory, finding herself living in the midst of a community engaged in a protracted law suit to recover title. The experience helped inspire Prof. Povinelli to return to pursue her doctoral degree in anthropology at Yale University before going to the University of Chicago to teach.

Throughout her career, Prof. Povinelli has grappled with the inconsistencies of liberal government in multicultural society, especially treatment of indigenous minorities and sexual liberty. She writes:

My first two books focused on impasses within liberal systems of law and value as they meet local Australian indigenous worlds, and the effect of these impasses on the development of legal and public culture in Australia. My most recent book examines how a set of ethical and normative claims about the governance of love, sociality, and the body circulate in liberal settler colonies in such a way that life and death, rights and recognition, goods and resources are unevenly distributed there.

Prof. Povinelli has highlighted that, even when the state sets about to right past injustice, the forms of reconciliation it finds often perpetrate new variants of old injuries, pulling up far short of truly recognising other cultural forms of right, social norms, and social justice.

In particular, in relation to Aboriginal title, Prof. Povinelli has written about the ‘cunning of recognition,’ the way in which liberal, multicultural society projects an impasse internal to a discourse of liberal exceptionalism onto indigenous subjects, demanding they produce enough difference to secure good associated with difference but not so much difference as to trigger liberal discipline. Prof. Povinelli’s work explores the inherent contradictions of claiming aboriginality in Australian courts, such as the difficulties posed by secret knowledge, often among the most sacred of a group’s inheritance, the attempt by the courts to homogenise and make absolute residency, and the privilege placed upon ‘disinterested’ arbitration when Aboriginal participants are heavily invested in the outcomes.

Of late, she and collaborators in Australia have been seeking to find ways to use new technologies, such as mobile phones, to try to record and re-embed local knowledge about land use into the experience of landscape.
Marcia Langton  
Plenary Panelist  
2009 Annual Meeting, Australian Anthropological Society

Professor Marcia Langton is the Foundation Chair in Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne. Prof. Langton’s long research career both inside and outside of academe has included explorations of land rights, the mining industry and indigenous communities, and the social impacts of development. She has written on Indigenous agreement-making, film and art, the preservation of traditional music, and Indigenous resource management, including Indigenous food sources.

Widely considered one of the most influential intellectuals in Australia, Prof. Langton’s career did not take her directly into academe. Prior to becoming the Ranger Professor of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies at the University of the Northern Territory (now Charles Darwin University) in 1995, she worked in a range of positions, with the Australian Film Commission, the Cape York Land Council, the State of Queensland, and as a land claims anthropologist with the Central Land Council.

Prof. Langton was a member of the 1989 Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody, writing a prescient discussion of the dangers of alcohol in remote communities, ‘Too much sorry business,’ a powerful call for control of sales to the vulnerable. She served on the National Indigenous Working Group on Native Title and was a member of the Aboriginal Native Title Negotiating Team in 1993, participating in the negotiations with the Australian Federal Government that led to the Native Title Act 1993. With funding from the Australian Research Council, Prof. Langton has more recently assembled a major collection of settlements and agreements with diverse Indigenous peoples.

Even though much of Prof. Langton’s work has been in policy and advocacy, she has also co-edited a number of important volumes, including First Australians: An Illustrated History (Melbourne University, 2008), Settling with Indigenous People: Modern Treaty and Agreement-Making (Federation Press, 2006), Honour Among Nations?: Treaties and Agreements with Indigenous People (Melbourne University Press, 2004), and Blacklines: Contemporary critical writing by Indigenous Australians (Melbourne University Press, 2003).

Her social advocacy, research, and teaching have earned Prof. Langton induction into the Order of Australia (1993), fellowship in the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia (2001), and the inaugural Neville Bonner Award for Indigenous Teacher of the Year (2002).

Throughout her career, Prof. Langton has helped to redefine the debate about Aboriginal rights and government policy toward Indigenous communities. She has discussed directly the potential pitfalls of different aid policies, the social problems in Indigenous communities, and the need for non-dogmatic approaches to reconciliation and development. She has consistently fought, not from a particular ideological position, but for specifically Aboriginal priorities, often taking positions that defied Australian political divides.

We are especially pleased to welcome Prof. Langton back to Macquarie University, where she took her Ph.D. in Human Geography, to complement her earlier work in Anthropology at the Australian National University.
interventions explores new constellations of creativity and collaboration in Aboriginal Australia.

Featuring photography, video, painting and installation from across the country, this exhibition is concerned with the possibilities that arise when researchers, instead of writing about Aboriginal people, take up visual media as a way of relating with others. Breaching conventional separations between art practice and scholarship—not to mention between the Indigenous ‘subject’ and the non-Indigenous ‘researcher’—interventions locates artists and ethnographers in shared fields of experimentation and cultural production.

interventions claims creativity as method; art as active social engagement; and aesthetics as located in the particularities of bodies, experiences, and relationships.

Innovative, genre defying, and critically challenging, the diverse works in this show—from Alice Springs, the Central and Western deserts, Arnhem Land, Cape York and south-east Queensland—are made possible by long-term, and highly personal, relationships with Indigenous communities. They reflect deep levels of respect for, and experience of, local cultures; they offer sights and insights that have arisen because of a willingness to work creatively with people in their own contexts and on their own terms.

These works, in short, pursue the possibility of an ‘inside gaze’ because of—not despite—the political and ethical stakes in such a project. The results—neither traditional Aboriginal art, nor traditional scholarship—highlight the potential for art to transform lives, histories, and outlooks.

interventions points to new ways forward for anthropology (a discipline that for many in the Australian context, remains tainted by its colonial past). More broadly, the exhibition offers a unique opportunity to appreciate more about what is at stake—and what is on offer—in on-going Indigenous struggles for recognition and reconciliation in this country. Collectively, these projects communicate a sense of vital social engagement that will challenge mainstream perspectives on Aboriginal art and society.

Curator

Jennifer Deger
Centre for Contemporary Art and Politics, COFA, UNSW

Participants

Michael Aird
Chris Barry
Jennifer Biddle and Rosie Napurrurla Tasman
Susan Marrawakamirr, David Gurrumurruwuy
Bukulaipji and Jennifer Deger
John von Sturmer
Tony Redmond

Macquarie University Art Gallery, Senior Curator

Rhonda Davis

Sponsors

The interventions exhibition would not be possible without the hard work of all participants, especially Jennifer Deger and Chris Barry, and the generous support of:

Macquarie University Art Gallery
Department of Anthropology, Macquarie University
Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University
Coffee Futures

The 2009 AAS Film Program features nineteen film and video works drawn from fourteen countries and representing over twenty language groups. The works selected span a broad spectrum of objectives, approaches to form and narrative styles; from short cultural preservation animation from Central Australia to feature drama from Inuit filmmakers, student films produced in the Leiden, Tromsø and Harvard University film study / visual anthropology programs and new short work from a UTS/University of Goroka collaborative training program.

In honour of Lévi-Strauss, who passed away only last month, we are pleased to present a special screening of the recently completed Brazilian/French documentary Claude Lévi-Strauss: Auprès de l’Amazonie.

This year’s program also includes the remarkable 1981 Australian film Two Laws, a work that we hope will resonate with many of the debates at the heart of the conference theme. Additional information about the films will be available at each session.

Lisa Stefanoff
Film program curator
Independent scholar

Wednesday, 9 December 2009

Coffee Futures (Neyse halim çiksin falim) (2009)

Coffee Futures weaves the custom of Turkish coffee fortune telling with Turkey’s decades-long attempt to join the European Union. This short documentary by Turkish-American anthropologist Zeynep Gürsel attempts to render the emotional texture of a society whose fate has long been nationally and internationally debated and the psychology of collectively waiting and anticipating a national future.
**Contact** (2009)

Dir. Bentley Dean and Martin Butler  
80 mins  
English and Martu with English subtitles

Introduction by visiting Martu people and ‘Cleared Out’ author Sue Davenport.

Martu woman Yuwali was 17 in 1964 when she and a group of 20 women and children were filmed on the edge of their traditional lives in the Percival Lakes area of the Great Sandy Desert by a patrol attempting to evacuate the ‘uninhabited’ area that was the group’s home, ahead of rocket tests that were to be launched from the Woomera base. **Contact** tells the story of how this group was chased through hundreds of kilometres of desert country, eluding the patrol for several weeks, before finally coming face to face with the two officers and their movie camera. Ultimately, the women and children were taken to Jigalong Mission, leaving their homeland for decades to come.

In **Contact**, Yuwali, now 62, vividly recollects the traumatic events of being chased by the patrol, revisiting the sites where they took place and dramatically replaying her thoughts and fears when she saw white men, vehicles and planes for the first time.

The film incorporates a wealth of archival photos and film footage from the patrol, some iconic fragments portraying Yuwali's family's first tentative steps towards non-Aboriginal Australian modernity. **Contact** is an unparalleled first-hand account of first contact events between Aboriginal people and Europeans.

Winner of the FOXTEL Australian Documentary Prize at the 2009 Sydney International Film Festival.

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**Claude Lévi-Strauss: Auprès de l'Amazonie** (2008)

Dir. Marcelo Fortaleza Flores  
52 mins  
French & Nambikwara with English subtitles

Claude Lévi-Strauss dedicated some of the most poetic passages of his influential *Tristes Tropiques* (1955) to the Nambikwara Indians with whom he lived in 1938 on his first trip to the Amazon when he was a young sociology professor at the University of Sao Paulo. Seventy years later, Brazilian anthropologist Marcelo Fortaleza Flores revisited the villages where Lévi-Strauss lived and other related communities. **Claude Lévi-Strauss: Auprès de l'Amazonie** weaves together anthropological and Nambikwara pasts and presents through the interleaving of the last-ever recorded video interviews with Lévi-Strauss, discussions with Tito Wakalitesu (the only Nambikwara Indian who remembers the 1938 expedition), visions of contemporary Nambikwara village life, rare archival footage taken by Lévi-Strauss, and scenes from Marechal Rondon’s expedition (1907-1915).

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**Film program**
Two Laws (Kanymarda Yuwa) (1981)

Borroloola Community
Dir. Carolyn Strachan and Alessandro Cavadini
130 mins.
Garrwa, Mara, Yanyuwa, Gurdandji and English with English subtitles.

Filmed in Borroloola (N.T.) between 1979 and 1981, Two Laws was a watershed in Australian ethnographic filmmaking when it first appeared nearly thirty years ago and received outstanding reviews across the world. Re-released as a DVD in 2009, the film remains a key work in considerations of the emergence of Indigenous and intercultural filmmaking in this country. Impressed by Strachan and Cavadini’s early film work in Redfern, in the southern Aboriginal Land Rights struggle (Ningla A-Na 1972) and on Palm Island (Protected 1975), Borroloola man Leo Finlay invited the filmmakers to visit his community to help people to tell their stories of struggling to live with the imposition of non-Aboriginal Australian law over traditional law. Formally bold, with dream-like pacing and wide-angle framing throughout, and including dramatizations of events in living historical memory that would impress Bertolt Brecht, the film embodies its Aboriginal creators’ senses of time, story, and kinship, revealing as it progresses the local laws informing their struggle to claim Land Rights title to their country. In Two Laws, the community invites its audience to sit down with different groups, to listen differently and to witness their filmic performance of a distinctive local intervention into dominant logics of history and culture.


Dir. Aaron Glass
33 mins
English

The Hamat’sa (or ‘Cannibal Dance’) is the most important-and highly represented-ceremony of the Kwakwaka’wakw (Kwakiutl) people of British Columbia. In Search of the Hamat’sa... traces the history of anthropological depictions of the dance and, through the return of archival materials to their community of origin, presents some of the ways in which diverse attitudes toward this history inform contemporary performances of the Hamat’sa. With a secondary focus on the filmmaker’s fieldwork engagements and experiences, the film also attends specifically to the ethics of ethnographic representation and to the renegotiation of relationships between anthropologists and their research partners. The archival and ethnographic material for the film was gathered, shot and edited between 2002 and 2004, during the course of Glass’ research and fieldwork for his cultural anthropology dissertation at New York University, through the Program in Culture and Media. In Search of the Hamat’sa... presents some of the complex issues involved in representing indigenous peoples and their expressive practices, especially insofar as anthropological materials are increasingly re-animated in Native communities where they are used and debated as one kind of historical resource amongst others.

Thursday, 10 December 2009


Dir. Aaron Glass
33 mins
English
**Season's Changing** (2009)

Dir. Judith Schouten, Eva Verboon and Tessa Steenbergen-du Pré  
25 mins  
Hungarian with English subtitles

Sannicolau de Munte is a small farming village in Transylvania. Some farmers work with traditional tools whilst others employ modern machines and technologies. In *Season's Changing*, three farmers reflect on the difficult transition from communist era production to highly regulated existence on the margins of the European Union. The farmers’ passion for their enterprise persists. They share with the filmmakers nostalgic stories of their hardworking pasts and their dreams of the future as they try to sustain their rural idyll under new political conditions. This short documentary was commissioned by the Rural Wageningen Foundation, a group organising extra activities for students, linking them to practice in ‘the green space’. Two of the young Dutch directors undertook training in Visual Anthropology at Leiden University, and one in Visual Media at the School of Arts in Utrecht.

**I can do anything** (2009)

Dir. Sarah Schreuder  
43 mins  
Dutch with English subtitles

*I can do anything* was shot in a communal home in the Netherlands for a group of eight people with mild to moderate mental handicaps. The home's supervisors provide individualized care that aims to support its residents to lead as full and independent lives as possible. This intimate documentary tells the stories of residents Kevin (17) and Nadia (21), through their own reflections on their lives, hopes and frustrations. Kevin ventures into paid work through a job at the local McDonald's and Nadia tries to feel happy in her relationship with her boyfriend. Kevin's and Nadia's experiences raise questions about full personhood and citizenship within the modern state and economy and give an insight into wider expectations about ‘normalcy’ in Dutch society.

Filmmaker Sarah Schreuder completed her B.A. in Cultural Anthropology at the University of Leiden in 2007, specializing in Visual Ethnography. *I can do anything* is the result of using visual ethnography as a research method towards an M.A. in Cultural Anthropology and Developmental Sociology.

**Tehran Has No More Pomegranates** (2007)

Dir. Massoud Bakhshi  
68 mins  
Persian with English subtitles

Director Massoud Bakhshi and crew serve as protagonists in a narrative about the impossibility of finishing a film about the city in which they live. Made over five years, *Tehran Has No More Pomegranates* blends satire with history to paint a portrait of the metropolis and its transformation into a megapolis of increasing urban mess, pollution, inadequate housing, class cleavages and the fatal destiny of its once delicious pomegranates. The filmmakers conduct a poll among the city’s inhabitants and the majority is satisfied. All accept for Mr Jafar. Mr Jafar is a new city dweller in search of a better life in the big city, but has lost his belongings and has been homeless for three months.
Aided by never before seen archival Iranian footage from the past hundred or more years and mock interviews with city officials, the film explains the complex life of Tehran’s inhabitants as they live alongside their past, wondering whether anything has changed at all. The film is both homage to what Tehran is and a lament for what it could never be.

As the introduction declares, Tehran Has No More Pomegranates is ‘a musical, historical, comedy, docu-drama, love story, experimental film’ that uses style and subject to capture the chaotic and paradoxical soul of one of the major cities of the world; as noted in the ‘Saudi Aramo World’ publication, it is an excellent example of ‘how ingenious Iranian filmmakers are ‘shooting between the lines’ to address sensitive issues’ about nation, state, power and history.

Winner of multiple prizes including the Audience Award at the CINEMA VERITE International Documentary Film Festival, Tehran 2007.

**Citizen Oketch** (2009)

Dir. Georg Götmark & David Herdies
58 mins
Swahili with English subtitles

*Citizen Oketch* is a documentary about people struggling to overcome the hardships of life in Kibera, one of East Africa’s largest slums; a story compelled by the dynamics of joy, friendship and love in the time of HIV/AIDS. For two and a half years, Swedish directors David Herdies and Georg Götmark followed George Oketch and Esther Okonyo as they raised their kids, fought to overcome the constant obstacles of disease and poverty, and tried to maintain a loving relationship.

George and Esther are from different tribes. Their families questioned their relationship from the outset. As Kenya is thrown into ethnic violence following the election in 2007, the family finds itself in the epicentre of the conflict, protecting the kids from both the angry rioting mob and the police teargas and bullets. As the mass media distributes images of burning slums, life in Kibera continues in the shadow of the dramatic spectacle. George works towards his goal of making enough money to be able to pay a dowry to Esther’s parents so as to legitimize their marriage, and secure the future of their children.

Providing a heartbeat for the dramatic narrative of the film, community radio station 99.9 Koch FM pumps out a grassroots ‘edutainment’ mix of messages and popular music.

**Before Tomorrow** (2008)

Dir. Marie-Hélène Cousineau and Madeline Ivalu
60 mins.
Inuktituk with English subtitles

In 1840, two isolated Inuit families reunite in celebration after many years of separation. These tribes have never met any white people, although rumours circulate about them. When Ninioq, an old woman, her best friend, Kuutujuuk, and her grandson, Maniq leave camp to dry fish on a remote island a strange illness attacks the camp. After the death of Kuutujuuk, Ninioq and her grandson are left alone in the world and most find the means and the will to survive.
Adapted by Susan Avingaq, Marie-Hélène Cousineau and Madeline Ivalu from the novel ‘For morgendagen’ by the acclaimed Danish writer Jørn Riel, and a co-production of the multi-award winning Inuit film group Igloolik Isuma Productions, Before Tomorrow is the first feature film from Igloolik’s Arnait Video Productions collective. The founding mandate of Igloolik Isuma Productions was to empower Inuit voices to tell their own stories. The Arnait collective has been gathering Inuit women’s stories since 1991 to produce a varied and extensive filmography, which draws on cultural authenticity and community involvement. The film was shot between July 2006 and January 2007 in remote locations near the community of Puvirnituq, Nunavik (northern Quebec) over four separate periods in order to capture the distinctive seasons depicted in the film. Writer-director Madeline Ivalu and her grandson Paul-Dylan Ivalu play two of the lead roles alongside Mary Qulitalik, Peter-Henry Arnatsiaq and Tumasie Sivuarapik.

Igloolik Isuma’s first feature, Zacharias Kunuk’s Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner, won the 2001 Camera d’or at Cannes. Its second feature, Zacharias Kunuk and Norman Cohn’s The Journals of Knud Rasmussen, opened the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival. Before Tomorrow was awarded Best Canadian First Feature at the 2008 Toronto International Film Festival.

Friday, 11 December 2009

Yumi Piksa: Mama Bilong Down Under / Nokondi’s Morning Call /Levekuka Clay (2009)

Yumi Piksa Workshop – University of Goroka
35 mins (total)
Tok Pisin with English subtitles

This year, Sydney-based filmmaker Verena Thomas (UTS) began facilitating filmmaking workshops in collaboration with the University of Goroka (UOG), working with highland people to tell their own stories, archive important local knowledge, develop independent media production capacity, and strengthen ties between the university and community. Following a somewhat different trajectory to the development of Indigenous media in Australia in the 1980s, UOG students are being trained in the use of video and new media technologies as dynamic research tools.

In this session, Verena Thomas will present three short films made through the Yumi Piksa project in the last six months that have recently played on CNN International as part of the Scene-by-Scene Program for the Asia Pacific Screen Awards.

An upcoming project, Komuniti Tok Piksa, funded by the PNG AIDS Council plans to produce visual HIV/AIDS awareness and education material, using the Yumi Piksa model of training and enabling local researchers and filmmakers to produce their own material in collaboration with PNG communities.
**Esset Soul of the Gurage** (2009)

Dir. Haile Seifu Woldeyohannes  
33 mins  
Gurage with English subtitles  

Friday  
11 December  
12:00  
E6A 102  

University of Tromsø Visual Cultural Studies student filmmaker Haile Seifu Woldeyohannes documents the central role and uses of the plant *esset* in the daily lives of the Sebat-bet Gurage people of western Ethiopia. Also known as ‘false banana’, *esset* is an essential human and animal food, a medium of the gendered social organisation of labor, a building material, a component of tools, and a symbol of moral identity. This short documentary evokes a lifeworld of intimate human-plant association whilst prioritizing the voices of the Gurage people self-consciously reflecting on the fundamental value of this distinctive fibre of their lives.

**Rules and Rebels** (2008)

Dir. Ronnie Smith  
28 mins  
Norwegian and English with English subtitles  

Friday  
11 December  
12:45  
E6A 102  

*Rules and Rebels*, a M.A. student film from the University of Tromsø Visual Cultural Studies program, is a portrait of Open Form avant-garde musician Else Olsen Storesund as she pursues her craft in the U.S. and in Norway. Smith presents a tightly edited collage of audio, visual and textual material to introduce viewers to a post-Cage high-art musical subculture in which chance is a key dynamic of aesthetics and artistry. The film depicts Else’s tutelage under renowned Open Form artists Pauline Oliveros (founder of the Deep Listening Institute), Christian Wolff (last remaining member of the New York School), Fred Frith (leading figure in US avant-garde sound performance) and Walter Thompson (creator of conducting technique known as Soundpainting).

**Awely anter (Healing fat)** (2008)

(Filmmaking) Ben Foley, Suzie Taylor.  
3.5 mins  
Eastern Anmatyerr with English subtitles.  

The end titles of this lively short animation from central Australia tell the viewer that

“*Awely* comes from the land. Women perform *awely* to look after country and keep the community healthy and strong. The *awely* in this film is for Ngkwelay, a place northeast of Ahaper (Arlparra) on the Utopia homelands. The song invokes the journeys of *kwey-ather* ‘two young girls’ as they travel through Ngkwelay. This animation grew from language, art and filmmaking workshops held throughout 2008. The concept and characters come from an artwork created by Rosie Ngwarray Kunoth, and a story told to linguist Jenny Green. The story is narrated in eastern Anmatyerr, one of several languages spoken in the Utopia homelands.”

*Awely anter* is one of many video projects documenting an integrated language, art and bush medicine project – *Intem-antey anem* (*These things will always be*) - supported by the Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics (CALL), the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) and the Central Land Council (Indigenous Ecological Knowledge program).
**Mer Rrkwer-akert** (2009)

Dir. April Campbell & Lisa Watts  
25 mins  
Anmatyerr and Warlpiri with English subtitles

*Mer Rrkwer-akert* shows Anmatyerr social responsibility towards caring for country, animals and plants through people’s cultural relationships to water. Traditional owners from Ti Tree community, north of Alice Springs, go on a journey to visit *Rrkwer* (Brooks Soak) to respect their ancestors, to perform ceremony and to see how the country has changed since they were last there, 40 years earlier.

“…Rrkwer is a very important place to Anmatyerr people because it holds a permanent water course that never dries up. We relied on *Rrkwer* for our survival, especially in times of drought. It is also a central meeting place of ceremonial importance for Anmatyerr and Warlpiri people”

As they travel into their water country, the owners find the land degraded and their water sources contaminated as a result of the open grazing management practices used by the local pastoralists. This degradation is compounded by the absence of their own physical presence on traditional lands now occupied by pastoral stations, a situation that is deeply upsetting.

Part of a Charles Darwin University and Anmatyerr Knowledge Centre project that also includes a DVD compilation of 24 public Anmatyerr women’s ceremonial songs from Brooks Soak country – *awely Rrkwer* – that perform management and knowledge of *Rrkwer* country and associated law. The primary purpose of this project is to preserve traditional knowledge for future generations of Anmatyerr land-owners and custodians.

**As Long As There is Breath** (2009)

Dir. Stephanie A. Spray  
57 mins  
Nepali with English subtitles

An observational portrait film shot in Badahare, Kaski District, Nepal and produced at the Film Study Center at Harvard University, *As Long As There is Breath* depicts a rural Nepali family’s struggles for cohesion despite everyday travails and the absence of a beloved son. While much of this film is concerned with absence, it is also about the continuation of life in the face of yearning and resignation.

Discontent with many anthropological and documentary approaches to social and political life in Nepal, the filmmaker experiments with long-shot duration and very still frames to create a narrative about the universal themes of absence, longing, and, finally, hope. The work takes its lead from a Nepali aphorism, ‘as long as there’s breath, there’s hope’ (*sās chaunjel āsa*), to explore how this existential theme is folded into the very fabric of life and the ways in which it punctuates the passage of time.

Terrace of the Sea (2009)
Dir. Diana Allen
56 mins
Arabic with English subtitles
Terrace of the Sea was shot in 2008 in Jal el Bahar, a Palestinian Bedouin gathering on a strip of cost on the outskirts of Tyre in South Lebanon. Another film from the Harvard University Film Studies Center, this work meditates on the distances between memory, photography and film and explores the relationships between past and present, land and the sea and between seeing and being seen.

Diana Allan is an anthropologist and filmmaker. She is the founder and co-director of the Nakba Archive, a testimonial project that has recorded 500 interviews on film with first generation Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon following the 1948 war, and the founder of Lens on Lebanon, a grassroots media initiative established during the 2006 Lebanon/Israel war. Other video works include Chatila, Beirut (2002); Nakba Archive Excerpts (2007) and Still Life (2007). Diana is currently working on Photo48, a photo book, which will be published by Saqi Books.

Film program

If you would like to join us for the 2009 Annual Conference of the Australian Anthropological Society, you can pre-register online or on-site (registration will be in the lobby of E6A).

All registrants will have access to the complete program, all presented papers, keynote lecture, plenary panels, film program, interventions exhibition, welcome reception, lunches and refreshment breaks. However, attendance at the conference banquet is a separate charge and must be reserved in advance for the sake of planning the catering. We welcome anthropologists, non-anthropologists, and crypto-anthropologists of all stripes to join us in celebration of the 40th anniversary of anthropology at Macquarie University.

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For more information and online registration: [http://www.anth.mq.edu.au/conf/](http://www.anth.mq.edu.au/conf/)

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