

# EXTRA! EXTRA!



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From 9 November to 15 December, Lucas Ihlein and the Rizzeria Collective take over the Kaldor Studio at the Art Gallery of NSW with **EXTRA!EXTRA!** – a weekly newspaper which responds critically and playfully to Making Art Public. Each week, editor-in-chief Lucas Ihlein and special correspondent Ian Milliss will be joined by special guest writers and artists, who will work with the Rizzeria team to print the newspaper in situ. Visitors to the Kaldor Studio are invited to write letters to the editor – and a selection of letters will be featured in each week's edition of **EXTRA!EXTRA!** Throughout the run of **EXTRA!EXTRA!** in the Kaldor Studio, you can also participate in a range of fun workshops and have a go at making a risographic print yourself!

**CONTENT DISCLAIMER**

The views expressed in the pages of **EXTRA!EXTRA!** are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or official policies of the editors, Kaldor Public Art Projects or the Art Gallery of New South Wales. We welcome responses to our articles, which can be submitted by writing posting a physical Letter to the Editor in the gallery space, or online at [extra-extra.press](mailto:extra-extra.press)



# EDITORIAL

It's now been five weeks since **EXTRA!EXTRA!** was born. Throughout the entire lifespan of the newspaper, Sydney has been enveloped in a pall of bushfire smoke, the intensity of which has never been seen before in this city. The location of our pressroom within the bowels of the Art Gallery of NSW in the heart of Sydney means our focus has spiraled out from the *Making Art Public* exhibition to encompass pressing issues in the wider world, including climate change, land rights and social justice. This week in the paper, Wendy Bacon covers the important and problematic dismissal of Aboriginal academic Tess Allas from University of NSW Art and Design. As Bacon demonstrates, as well as being an accomplished curator, Allas has made a crucial contribution to the pastoral care and education of Indigenous and minority students over many years, and serious questions are raised about the process of this dismissal.

In Edition 5 we continue our investigation of the relationship between art and journalism with a story on award-winning photojournalist Lorrie Graham, whose work is featured on the cover of the paper. Lorrie's moving photos of the community's battle to block the West-Connex roadway in Sydney will be shown in our pressroom until the end of our residency at the AGNSW. Her documentation of the activists' wrapping of condemned trees is eerily reminiscent of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *Two Wrapped Trees* from 1969. Finally, this week we were joined in the **EXTRA!EXTRA!** newsroom by visiting Canberra artists Caren Florence and Shags. Both are accomplished printmakers, and relished the opportunity to be artists-in-residence within the *Making Art Public* exhibition. Their graphic pieces created in response to the exhibition are offered as a bonus lifout in this edition of the paper.



Lucas Ihlein is an artist and member of Big Fag Press and Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation.

# WHO WILL PRESERVE OUR DIGITAL ARCHIVES?



Lorrie Graham is a photojournalist. And a bloody talented one at that. I had the pleasure of sitting down with her to discuss her work, why photojournalism isn't recognised within major arts institutions, and why without institutional support we are in danger of losing our digital archives.

Lorrie Graham broke the glass ceiling in the 1970s when appointed to a photographic cadetship at *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Dozens of women followed her in years to come. Lorrie's work has appeared in most of the greatest international newspapers and magazines, and features across all Fairfax titles in Australia.

Having combatted an alarming amount of sexism and hostility, Lorrie went on to work for *The Observer* in London, *Rolling Stone* magazine, and *The National Times*.

Over the last 40 years she has photographed former Australian Prime Ministers Bob Hawke, Paul Keating, and John Howard, and collaborated with creators such as Andy Warhol, Barry Humphries, Cate Blanchett and an overwhelming number of other notable figures. But Lorrie is a significant player in her own right through photojournalism that features a strong social conscience, an eye for detail, and masterfully constructed visual storytelling.

But why isn't the work of photojournalists recognised within major arts institutions? She invited me into her home to reflect on these concerns.

Lorrie's work has actually been collected by the National Gallery of Australia, the National Portrait Gallery, the National Library, the Museum of Sydney and the State Library of NSW. She makes it clear that her intention isn't to bitch about not being collected, and admits she's been one of the lucky few in that sense.

"Photojournalism is such a specific and incredibly important area that I don't think has been recognised by institutions to the degree that it needs to be", Lorrie says.

Lorrie's concern stems from the fact that international photojournalists are recognised while the abundance of talent to be found in our own backyard is ignored.

Why aren't more Australian photojournalists represented within our major galleries and

institutions? Photojournalists play a fundamental role in contributing to media coverage, they drive visual storytelling. So why aren't their images deemed art worthy?

It seems that purely "aesthetic" modes of photography are valued more than utilitarian approaches to imagery. Perhaps an image is deemed art worthy from an institutional standpoint only when it shows signs of interpretation by an "artistic" sensibility? But this is a false distinction which does not acknowledge the creativity and social engagement involved in producing "factual" photographs.

Lorrie added that it might also stem from the idea that photojournalism is a form of employment outside the art world so art institutions may not attempt to see beyond its commercial use.

"They don't see the worth in it because it's in their face and they can't separate it out. And there's no curiosity about it. I don't think there's a great deal of exploring of photojournalism by the art world" Lorrie says.

But when I reflect on some of the images that have resonated with me in the past, they are all the work of talented photojournalists.

"Photojournalism embodies all those elements that are really important in people's placement of memory, placement of time, placement of huge events that have happened in the world," Lorrie says.

She also notes that frequent photographic competitions might perpetuate a belief that there are plenty of opportunities for photographers to establish their reputations and gain exposure. Social media platforms such as Instagram are also useful, opening opportunities for collaboration and community engagement.

"I think there is a huge plus in social media now. And you can almost circumvent the big institutions", Lorrie says.

These social media platforms allow emerging artists, creatives, and photojournalists alike a means of connectivity that was not present when Lorrie had began her own career. Lorrie has her own blog where she regularly posts, focusing on women over 50. "The reason I do that is because I'm passionate about women not being seen after

We've loved working on **EXTRA!EXTRA!** and now that our tenure in the Kaldor Studio is coming to a close, we'd like to thank Kaldor Public Art Projects and the Art Gallery of NSW for accommodating our rambunctious and energetic team of artists, designers and journalists. As I mentioned in my Editorial in week 1, none of us have ever done anything quite like this before. Now that we're at the end of the process, having accomplished our goal of creating a weekly newspaper as a work of live art, we can see enormous potential for this model. Long-live journalism as an ever-evolving, context-specific artform!



Lucas Ihlein is an artist and member of Big Fag Press and Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation.

a certain age for what they are. And also, being recognised for what they've done".

She has also been using her photography in local activism. She says on the WestConnex Action Group blog, "I've been documenting the Stop WestConnex campaign since early 2015, when I first became aware of the devastating impact this tollway would have on our communities. Later that year, my husband Greg and I started a group called Save Newtown from WestConnex."

The group even used wrapping as an activist tool to draw attention to trees in Sydney Park that WestConnex was about to destroy. "So we found some recycled material in the same colour as the WestCONnex branding and began to wrap the condemned trees in and around Sydney Park. We let people know that if you see a blue ribbon, that tree is dead, gone, destroyed unless we take action to stop WestCONnex."

In our conversation, one of the concerns that Lorrie also stressed was the problems inherent in preserving digital imagery. Lorrie predicts that we won't be left with an archive of imagery.

"So where is the archive of the future?" Lorrie says.

The past is being neglected and now it's slowly disappearing. Institutions need to ensure that our history is being preserved, which means allowing for storage capacity of RAW files and funding to support the care of our digital archival material. Hopefully this might lead to the recognition photojournalists deserve for their contribution to media coverage, and their capacity to produce and compose artful interpretations of the world we live in.

Amber Jones



IMAGE: Tree wrapping campaign run by Save Newtown from WestCONnex to try and save as many trees targeted for destruction and replaced by a Tollway. Credit and copyright Lorrie Graham

Amber is an interdisciplinary performance artist, theatre-maker, and journalist



Kaldor Public Art Project 32: Jonathan Jones. Kangaroo grassland, barrangal dyara (skin and bones), Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney, 17 September – 3 October 2016. © Jonathan Jones

# GRANDMOTHER LESSONS

Hello! There you are! I've been waiting for you! Come in, come with me...

By no means am I any kind of expert about anything and sometimes I'm not even sure yet what there is in front of me to learn but I go in anyway, with or without a map...and most times I end up at a completely different place than I thought I was headed! Please let me try to explain this better... When we first met, yes, you and I, I had hoped to give you something. I hoped to leave you with something, an idea, a new question to ask, a memory or a seed planted. I have since come to understand that I don't have to be an expert. People are willing and wanting to share their knowledge and experience so we can all learn and for this I am grateful. So, shall we go in?

Have you ever sat with an artwork and thought, I get some of it... but I know there's more? You say to yourself; it's trying to tell me more... there are more layers and deeper levels here... Have you ever wished you could ask an artist those questions that keep running through your mind? Well folks, this week I have had the privilege of such an opportunity, and I'd like to share it with you... Come with me, let's go sit with Jonathan Jones' *barrangal dyara (skin and bones)* (2016) again. *barrangal dyara (skin and bones)* hasn't left my thoughts all week. It has raised for me more questions about the layers - and those layers don't seem to want to let me go.

So, through my involvement with **EXTRA!EXTRA!** I took the opportunity to email Jonathan Jones some questions about his work, and his thoughts on some of the topics we've been talking about: respect for Country and traditional Custodians, artistic accountabilities and collaborating. I thought of it as an electronic cup of tea... a cup I'd like to share with you.

As I listened, re-listened and traced through the recording Jonathan made, I noticed that deep

respect is woven through all his words, no matter what the topic. Respect seems to be at the core of everything. It's apparent in the way he speaks about his relationships with Country, Elders, and Community. From collaborators to local people, traditional Owners, their stories, memories and histories and how to best represent them. I could hear respect, for his use of materials, making processes and the responsibility of his role as an artist. All of this is the foundation of his practice.

Now, hearing his words arrange themselves into beliefs and principles, to my way of hearing things folks, this is no ordinary explanation of what it is respectful art practice because...echoing around me, I remember my Mother teaching similar things to me. Respect your Elders, listen to your Elders and look after them. She'd say things like, be grateful for what you have and if you have something, share it, don't let others go without. In the recording Jonathan says he deliberately wants to "ensure the benefits of an art project aren't just for the artist. Art and cultural practices need to lift everyone and not just benefit one or two. By pooling our knowledges we can create benefits for the entire community and grow together." These ideas resonate strongly within me personally.

The further into Jonathan Jones' recording I went and the longer I sat with *barrangal dyara (skin and bones)*, I felt the immaturity of my questions being unknotted and given back to me in a weaving, that I experienced more as feelings and memories. It seems to me that Jonathan Jones' in his art practice walks ancient connected paths, deeply trodden, reclaimed and brought back to our modern world for healing the future before it's measured on a calendar. That's when it finally dawned on me - he isn't using new words, new ideas, new principles or even new philosophies, but old ones. Very, very old ones...

Hmmm... so folks, where to from here? I've hardly begun to share with you, before I am drawn to stop...you decide from here because I don't know if I'm explaining myself properly, but I do hope two things. Firstly, that I have been respectful and grateful for what was shared with me and what I have learned. Secondly, that you might take your responsibility in hand and listen carefully to the layers and the layers of meaning inside Jonathan's words. The invitation is there for everyone and I kind of believe that, if I can hear my Mother in them, then most certainly I am listening to my Grandmother, perhaps as she listened to hers... and this then is, the deepest collaboration I could ever hope for but never imagined.

Let me step a little outside myself for a moment and attempt to unfurl what I think I understand. *barrangal dyara (skin and bones)* the artwork is a conduit for local Indigenous voices, histories, knowledges and Custodianship. In part it is a signpost of Indigenous cultural resilience and revitalisation of Indigenous philosophies and knowledges. By undertaking and following traditional pathways and learning practices in producing the work, in effect all those involved have created it.

Here's how I understand it. Jonathan Jones' and those with whom he collaborates undertake these traditional pathways and practices such as listening and learning from Elders about Country, local people, their histories, memories, repariations and sharing knowledge. In doing so they are simultaneously revitalising and activating Indigenous culture and philosophies in the 21st Century. Now folks, bear with me while I think this through further... if I can hear my Grandmother, through my Mother, my memory and Jonathan's creative processes and the work, then is what I am feeling, thinking and doing, my Indigenous ontological and epistemological under-

standings of time, the world before me, around me and within me, in the here and now?

I leave you with this question: regardless of what century we tell ourselves we are in and all the things we've met about today... is Indigenous art a form of philosophy, or an expression of it?

It seems, I am the one who has been given something...

Juundaal Strang-Yettica

*Some of the readings that have been helpful in my thinking:*

Shawn Wilson, *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Fernwood Publishing, 2008.

Zoe Todd, *"Indigenizing the Anthropocene"*, in *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environment and Epistemology*, edited by Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin, Open Humanities Press, 2015.

*I want to give my gratitude and respect to Jodi Edwards, Nathan Sentence, Jonathan Jones, Antonia Fredman, Wendy Bacon and the Kat-in-the-Hat, for their guidance and support for this little project. I also want to thank all of you before we say goodbye, I wish you well and I wish you many more questions to come.*



An edited version of the audio conversation between Jonathan Jones and Juundaal Strang-Yettica will be uploaded to the **EXTRA!EXTRA!** website - scan this abovecode to find it.



Juundaal Strang-Yettica: "I don't know much about much but the learning keeps me alive!"



# STAND WITH TESS

Thirty artists and academics, including several significant Indigenous artists, have vowed to boycott University of New South Wales galleries unless they reappoint long-term Indigenous staff member and Director of Indigenous Programs Tess Allas, whose contract was terminated in October.

Tess Allas, who has worked at UNSW Art and Design for more than 13 years, was told by the Dean of Art and Design Professor Ross Harley in October that her contract would not be renewed. Allas has been responsible for teaching courses about Aboriginal art and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other students. She is a practising artist with a Masters in Curatorial Studies.

It is not unusual for contract staff members to be terminated in universities. What is extraordinary about this situation is a public campaign calling for a reversal of the decision and an outpouring of support for Tess Allas from the Indigenous and the academic art communities.

A student led campaign #StandwithTess launched an online petition which has more than 1600 signatories, and scores of letters of support have been sent to Professor Harley from people familiar with Allas' work as an artist, educator and academic.

At a #StandwithTess rally on November 5, artist Tony Albert called for the boycott of UNSW galleries. Albert is a well known Indigenous artist who has exhibited in the Art Gallery of NSW and many other high profile museums. His work critiques institutional racism. At the rally, Albert acknowledged Allas as a "proud Aboriginal woman and a teacher beyond comparison. Tess Allas is the kind of leading figure any university would and should hold up as a valued member of staff. Tess is not an academic whose conclusion comes from reading and research, while she is incredibly versed in both. Her voice is one of lived experience, someone on the ground, someone present. I'm appalled at the way the university is treating Tess Allas". Albert described the decision to terminate Allas as one of institutional racism and asked, "Where is the recognition for the oldest, living, surviving culture in the world?" Albert is currently working with leading contemporary artists Richard Bell and Daniel Boyd. "We are calling for all Indigenous artists and their allies to boycott UNSW Galleries. We will never exhibit in the confines of this university again" unless Allas is re-employed.

Signatories to the boycott call also include Joan Ross, Dale Harding, Reko Rennie, Julie Gough, and New Zealand-born artists Hayden Fowler and Angela Tiitahi. First Nations Canadian artist Adrian Stinson of the Siksika Nation in Southern Alberta has sent letters to Vice-Chan-

cellor Ian Jacobs and the Dean Ross Harley and has posted a video in support of Allas on Instagram. Stinson says that he is "baffled by the decision" because Allas is the "most wonderful professional director of indigenous programming that UNSW could ever have." He says that the failure to respond to his concerns shows a lack of "professionalism, accountability and transparency." The #StandwithTess instagram account also features artist Vernon Ah Kee wearing a #StandwithTess t-shirt when he addressed the Australian Association for Research in Education conference last week.

Several senior academics have also supported the boycott, including art historian and feminist art practitioner Latrobe University Professor Jacqueline Millner, Head of School at Macquarie University Professor Joseph Pugliese and UNSW Associate Professor Joanna Mendelssohn. A blunt blog post by Mendelssohn on *The Art Life* website was headlined 'Asset-stripping', a reference to what she said was a "loss of someone so crucial to the well-being of students and staff." Mendelssohn attributes the success to-date of UNSW Art and Design as a "quiet leader in the achievements of both its Aboriginal students and those from minority backgrounds" not to major funding but to the "efforts of one staff member, Tess Allas."

Allas began working as a researcher on Vivien Johnson's *Storylines*, for which she wrote hundreds of biographies of Aboriginal artists. From there she began to teach courses on Aboriginal art which Mendelssohn argues "transformed the lives of many students and changed career paths." Mendelssohn regards Allas' work as "crucial to the well-being of students and staff alike."

For some years, Allas has held contracts as both a lecturer and a professional support staff member. Allas has curated and co-curated significant exhibitions including the award-winning *With Secrecy and Despatch*, which was commissioned by the Campbelltown Arts Centre in partnership with UNSW Art and Design in 2016.

The #StandwithTess campaign has dampened the UNSW Art and Design end of year alumni and graduate events, with security staff keeping activists away and moving some of the events inside. There has been an ongoing guerilla campaign to repost posters and stickers removed from walls.

*EXTRA!EXTRA!*'s reporter attempted to interview and then sent questions to Professor Harley, who forwarded them to UNSW communications. UNSW responded with a statement: "UNSW Sydney is unable to comment on individual staffing matters because of confidentiality considerations. In line with University policy, all

faculty staffing decisions are made at the faculty level with the final endorsement of the University. UNSW understands the concerns and interest in how it supports Indigenous students and staff. UNSW has a long and proud history in the education of Indigenous people. The University is committed to providing learning opportunities that embrace Indigenous knowledge, culture and histories. The University achieves this through interactions with passionate Indigenous staff, access to world-class teaching and research activities, and connections to a robust community. We continue to be a leader in educating the next generation of Indigenous students while inspiring Indigenous researchers and practitioners to achieve their educational needs and aspirations."

UNSW is confident that by continuing its Indigenous Strategy in 2020, it will "create an improved structure for the ground-breaking work UNSW already does. The university has offered to meet with the Design and Art students in the New Year.

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) will be unimpressed with UNSW's response to the #StandwithTess campaign. NTEU organiser Sarah Gregson told the #StandwithTess rally on November 5 that previous commitments to increase First Nations employment at the University had been undermined when the contract renewals of staff without secure appointments came up. "What do they do? They rely on weasel words and empty strategy documents and show that they really have no intention of properly meeting those commitments."

The Faculty Student Council President Jack Poppert and #StandwithTess campaigners delivered several demands to UNSW management last week. They are concerned that far from arrangements being in place for 2020, students are enrolled in Allas' regular and advertised *Aboriginal Art Now* course without a lecturer appointed to teach it. They argue that the issue is now a very public one, and criticise the Faculty for failing in "their responsibility to everyone affected by this decision." Their demands include a meeting with senior management before the end of 2019 and an apology for the hurt done to Allas, UNSW Elder in Residence Vic Chapman and Indigenous students.

While the university claims to be holding to its strategy, Elder in Residence 87-year old Yuwaalaraay man Vic Chapman rejects this notion. Chapman is highly regarded by UNSW. Only a year ago, UNSW newsroom issued a release documenting his contribution to UNSW Art and Design, through his mentorship role in the Printmaking Studio. "Vic Chapman acts

as a mentor, the grace and precision of his wise counsel is incalculable and is not restricted to our Indigenous cohort," said the Head of Printmaking Michael Kempson. Last November, UNSW Chancellor David Gonski conferred an Honorary Fellowship on Chapman who has also been awarded an Order of Australia for services to the Indigenous community, tertiary education and the visual arts. In November this year, Chapman wrote to Gonski, the Vice Chancellor and other senior staff expressing his deep "disappointment in your institution, arguing that the decision (to terminate Allas) "will in no way benefit the current crop of Indigenous Art & Design students and will only serve to decrease any future intake of Indigenous students in this faculty." So far, he has received only an acknowledgement and no meeting has been organised with him.

This week Chapman told *EXTRA!EXTRA!*, "Tess is well known locally, nationally and internationally in the art world, with international curatorial awards, etc. Her strong support of students and staff in the workplace – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – surrounding her dismissal speaks volumes for her concern for them, her commitment and capability as a teacher."

Chapman believes that the UNSW galleries will be poorer as a result of the boycott by Indigenous artists. If Allas is not at the university next year, he will also relinquish his role as Elder in Residence. Chapman rejects UNSW's assurance that its Indigenous Strategy is not damaged by the decision to terminate Allas and says, "I have spent most of my almost 88 years working in the field of education. In the Teacher's Handbook which governed the conduct of schools I worked in, there was a regulation which stated that a person of Indigenous descent could be barred from the Public School system on the protest of one non-Indigenous member of the school community. It remained in the Handbook until 1972 and acted upon until the late 1960's. I wonder if what is happening to Tess is an echo of those times."

Wendy Bacon

*\*(Tess Allas declined to be interviewed for this story.)*



Wendy Bacon has been an urban activist and journalist since 1969. She is a non practising lawyer & was previously the Professor of Journalism at the University of Technology Sydney.

Image from @standwithtessi instagram account



## JOURNALISM INTO ART (PART 5): THE QUESTION.



Hans Haacke, *Der Bevölkerung*, 2000. Photo by Richard Alois.

*In his final article for EXTRA!EXTRA! on the work of Hans Haacke, Chris Nash delves deeper into the art/journalism divide. Intriguingly, Nash argues that Haacke's art work is 'replicable' in the sense that scientific research or journalistic investigations are replicable, because the artist asks very explicit questions which shape each of his projects. It is in the playing out of these questions in specific circumstances that the work's impact is made. As Nash points out, "meaning resides in the social reaction to an artwork, whatever its form and substance, and is not intrinsic to the work itself" – and this is also something that is clearly evident in the most significant of the works in the Making Art Public exhibition.*

In his catalogue essay for Hans Haacke's cancelled Guggenheim exhibition in 1971, curator Edward Fry made the following points about Haacke's practice as an artist:

"Haacke so treats his own ready-mades that they remain systems representing themselves and therefore cannot be assimilated to art. Thus he violates the mythic function, to which art has long been assigned, of acting as a buffer between man (sic) and the nature of reality. His work instead presents a direct challenge, not only to the fatal but convenient bourgeois separation of art from life, but also to the related view that art functions as a symbolic transformation and interpretation of experience."

"The approach to reality offered by Haacke acts not only as a severe critique of previous modern art, but also serves to eliminate arbitrary boundaries within our culture between art, science and society."

"Haacke's world is rigorously materialist, not symbolic, but his materialist view is of such large dimensions and possesses a logic and truthfulness of such clarity that it reaches the level of an almost transcendental moral force."

To rephrase and elaborate on Fry's observations, we can say that Haacke is establishing a direct verifiable relationship between the content of his art and some selected instance of the real material world, such that the selected instance is both the art work, and also continues in the world with its own existential integrity regardless of its status as art.

This art/reality relationship is the same as a science/reality relationship, where a scientific observation or experiment lifts the empirical object/process under observation into the realm of scientific research, but at the same time that event/process continues in the world with its

own integrity and can be reproduced or observed and verified by other scientists independently.

It is also the same as journalistic research, where the essence of the truth being asserted is that the object/event, even if it was produced through a photo opportunity or an interview question with the goal of being reported, continues in the real world as a verifiable event/object. It is thoroughly founded in a rigorous empirical materialism, with no required interpretive or symbolic transformation through an artistic representation or symbolic interpretation. Of course, original empirical evidence can be transformed into myth or symbolism, or ornamented with aesthetic flourishes, but the point is that that requires an active process of production and interpretation, and is not intrinsic to the evidence itself.

Like any scientific experiment or observation, Haacke's art is replicable by other artists in the same way that scientific research has to be replicable and verified to be validated. The same validation requirement applies to journalism, which is why Haacke could use journalistic methods in his research, and also why highly regarded social scientists like Pierre Bourdieu attributed a scholarly research status to his work alongside its artistic merit.

So Fry is correct, and Haacke's work "serves to eliminate arbitrary boundaries within our culture between art, science and society". As a direct consequence of this approach (or methodology), Haacke is blowing up the notion of the artist as a creative, highly individualised sole operator whose authentic work is necessarily singular and can be copied but never truly replicated. He is destroying the notion that the artwork must be an object that can be decontextualized and commodified – abstracted and hung on a wall or put on a pedestal. True, intellectual property laws can be applied to artistic processes as much as to scientific ones, but such laws are an external social imposition on the work in question, and by no means immanent to the processes and works themselves.

So if the authenticity of Haacke's art does not reside in the uniqueness of its material content, where does it reside? As with science and journalism, it resides in the questions that the artwork poses. What makes for good scientific research is a good research question, as any scientist will tell you. What makes for good journalism is a good set of questions: *what's the story? Who are the players? What is at stake?*

**What makes for good journalism is a good set of questions: what's the story? Who are the players? What is at stake?**

What unites Haacke's conception of art with science and society is the fundamental focus on what scholars call methodology – what is the question that you are wanting to ask? Why is that a good question? How, where and when are you going to pose it in order to achieve an answer?

Journalists, like artists, are generally terrible at discussing methodology – when pushed, journalists tend to fall back on ethical justifications, and artists on 'creativity' or 'imagination'. But ethics, creativity and imagination apply to research in the social and physical sciences just as much as to art and journalism. And journalists are very good at identifying questions, and the methods they might use to achieve answers; similarly, artists can discuss methods in great detail.

The 'how, when, where and why' of asking questions is at the very centre of Haacke's contribution to art and to journalism. Information about the real estate moguls in the cancelled Guggenheim exhibition of 1971 could have been published in newspapers, leaflets, radio programs (all of which it was), but the Guggenheim's issue was the content in relation to the art gallery location for exhibition. What Messer's response in cancelling the exhibition demonstrated was that it is absolutely not acceptable to question how New Yorkers make money from real estate in the elite art galleries that depend on wealthy patrons for their income and public status. And it is especially not acceptable to pose that question in the form of an artwork. That is the meaning of *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971* and *Sol Goldman and Alex diLorenzo Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971*.

Similarly Haacke's large garden box of untended weeds that constitutes the controversial *DER BEVÖLKERUNG* ("To the Population") artwork in the north courtyard of the refurbished Reichstag building in Berlin would be uncontroversial on a vacant block anywhere outside that building. But when it was proposed in 1998, in the temporal context of public and parliamentary

debates about changing the definition of German citizenship away from the 1938 racial basis, the decision went to the full parliament and the Bundestag spent more time discussing the proposed artwork than it did the deployment of German troops to the Balkan War (the first extra-territorial deployment of German armed forces since World War II). The debate was frontpage news in the German media. The commission was finally approved by a majority of 360 to 358 votes, with 32 abstentions – no doubt a highly curated result. Collectively, those facts are essential to the meaning of *DER BEVÖLKERUNG*.

Clearly Haacke also has what journalists would call a 'news sense', or what scientists might call an intuition, for the social context and meaning of an issue. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, with whom Haacke collaborated on a book *Free Exchange* (1995), would suggest his concepts of habitus and cultural capital are highly relevant. The fundamental consideration for art, journalism and science is that meaning is a social construct, it can be highly political if it challenges social and political elites, and that meaning resides in the social reaction to an artwork, whatever its form and substance, and is not intrinsic to the work itself.

Haacke's work is enormously liberating to artists, journalists and scientists of all disciplines in opening up the range of ways that questions about the real world can be posed with great forensic power. It exposes institutional silences, and sheets home accountabilities, usually by way of self-identification in the public debates that ensue. Very exciting!

Chris Nash



Chris Nash is a former journalist and academic and author of *What is Journalism? The Art and Politics of a Rupture*.



# SELECTIVE MEMORIES

Until Kaldor Public Art Projects came along most of the public art in Australia took the form of memorials of one sort or another designed to preserve the memory of a person or event. It was a starkly instrumental view of art that valued it mostly as a reference to something else rather than something to be admired in its own right. Even a sculpture as hypnotic as the *Archibald Fountain* (in Sydney's Hyde Park) was actually intended as a war memorial commemorating the relationship between Australia and France in the First World War.

Memorials can have complex meanings that change over time. *What exactly should we remember?* Memorials exclude as much as they include, and who decides who is included? As Judith Pugh notes in her essay, often the historical events that are memorialised are less important than the social power displayed by creating the memorials, disguising meanings that are not immediately apparent.

While the Kaldor Projects seemed to be simply staging radical art of a sort rarely seen previously in Australia, they also implicitly represented the influence of post Second World War immigration and the rise of multiculturalism. The radicalism of the projects reflected John Kaldor's grounding in full blooded European modernism, at a time when most Australian art still reflected the more insipid and timid British version of modernism.

Nonetheless, several of the projects deal directly with memorialisation. The most obvious is Project 19, Tatzu Nishi's *War and peace and in between* (2009) where the heroic equestrian sculptures at the front of the Art Gallery of NSW were captured within suburban rooms. The overscaled

earnestness of the bronze horses has always felt wrong for their location, and the uncomfortable militarism of *The Offerings of War* became farcical when trapped in a domestic bedroom. *The Offerings of Peace* on the other hand seemed puzzled by the mundane bourgeois soft furnishings of a modernist living room. Both were proof that the bombast of memorials can be easily punctured.

A very different type of memorialisation, via re-enactment, can be seen in the refugee cages of Project 16, Gregor Schneider's 21 Beach Cells on Bondi Beach in 2007. The 4 x 4 metre cells contained amenities for visitors – an air mattress, beach umbrella and black plastic garbage bag – and were soon inhabited by beachgoers looking for a site to rest and find shelter from the sun. But the cells were reminiscent of Australia's Manus Regional Processing Centre, a concentration camp for refugees opened in 2001, giving the whole work a sinister edge as beach goers using the cages unwittingly acted out the racist claims that the camps were tropical Edens, a virtual holiday resort.

War memorials are the most common memorials in Australia yet the most important war is never mentioned. The European invasion and the genocidal war on Australia's Indigenous owners is at the heart of Project 32, Jonathan Jones *barrangal dyara (skin and bones)*. If the memorial halls that Judith Pugh discusses can be seen as assertions of the invaders' control of Country, Jonathan Jones brings that hidden history back into view. Part of this remembering happens through *remaking*, in the form of 17,000 shields that represent the destroyed artifacts that had been stored in the Garden Palace building.



Kaldor Public Art Project 16: Gregor Schneider. 21 beach cells, Bondi Beach, Sydney, 28 September – 21 October 2007. © Gregor Schneider. Photo: Gregor Schneider

It could be argued that an exhibition such as *Making Art Public*, made from archival material relating to a series of events, is a form of memorial, a memory of events rather than the events themselves. But the final memorial is a memorial of the exhibition itself. I'm thinking of Alicia Frankovich's performance *The Work* (2019) in which original workers on Kaldor projects over the last half-century revisited fragments of their own activities in a complex and playful choreographed re-enactment.

This all raises the question of how we memorialise important events in contemporary society. In her article on the saving of Kellys Bush, a public reserve close to John Kaldor's home. As the first Green Ban, Kellys Bush represents a cultural moment as significant in its way as *Wrapped Coast*, and one with even greater worldwide consequences, yet this significance is barely recognised at the site. Wendy Bacon's archival investigation notes that there are only two small pieces

of signage about the history of the area. This way of marking history is clearly inadequate, since the battle for Kellys Bush was arguably the small spark that triggered a worldwide movement. The tourist Petra Kelly learned of the Green Bans while visiting Australia in the early 1970s and was inspired to form the first Green Party on her return to Germany. That party began the green parliamentary movement around the world. How could we better memorialise the small suburban inspiration of such an enormously influential movement?

Ian Milliss



Ian Milliss is an artist who worked on *Wrapped Coast*.

# SUBURBAN BATTLERS WHO CHANGED THE WORLD

If you catch a ferry from Circular Quay in Sydney to Woolwich Pier on the Hunters Hill peninsula and take a short walk, you will find a small nature reserve on the coast called Kellys Bush.

At a lookout, you will find a plaque commemorating the handing over of the reserve to Hunters Hill Council in 1993 by NSW National Party Minister Robert Webster and then local Liberal MP Kerry Chikarovski. It notes that a local group called the "Battlers for Kellys Bush" fought to save the land; it was the site of the first Green Ban; and the land was purchased by the NSW government in 1983. If you venture into the bush, you will see another small faded metal photo of some of the 13 "local housewives"; the Battlers who saved the bush along with Jack Munday, the leader of one of the unions who imposed the Green Ban in 1971.

Beyond these plaques, there is little to help visitors understand a struggle of worldwide significance that saved this seven hectares of bush for public use. There is no mention of the Wran Labor government that bought the land for public use in 1983 or the NSW Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) or crane drivers' union (FEDFA), the key unions that imposed the ban. Like many memorials, the choice of words in these plaques was political and controversial.

There is also nothing to inform you that this land at the meeting of the Parramatta and Lane Cove rivers is part of the ancestral lands of the

Wallumettagal clan of the Eora nation, the Indigenous people of this part of the Sydney basin. For thousands of years, they took care of the bush. After they were killed by smallpox or driven off their land, the bush became a buffer between a smelter works and the Hunters Hill village that is today one of Sydney's best known heritage suburbs. For seventy years, locals used Kellys Bush for walking and fishing. Although it was privately owned, some farsighted mid-20th century planners could see Sydney's coast was disappearing fast and zoned the bush "open space".

While Christo and Jeanne-Claude were doing their temporary "wrap" of Little Bay in 1969, decisions were being made that could have permanently obliterated Kellys Bush. Sydney was in the middle of a property boom and developers were eyeing off every piece of available land.

When the smelter works moved, the local Mayor and NSW government decided to seek a buyer for Kellys Bush. One of Australia's biggest housing developers AV Jennings snapped up an option and later bought the land. They planned to build high rise apartments, although they later downscaled their plans to 25 homes.

In September 1970 a group of 13 local women met in a parish hall and formed the Battlers for Kellys Bush. When the NSW government conveniently changed the zoning from "open space" to "residential" with the flick of a Minister's pen,

all seemed lost. Then the Battlers took a brave and imaginative step. Bridging class and political divides, they sought the help of militant communist-led construction unions. With the broader union movement behind them, the BLF and the FEDFA imposed what became known as a "green ban". No unionist would work on the site. Jennings' plan came to an unexpected halt.

Kellys Bush was the launching pad for a unique movement called the Green Bans, a form of strike or boycott that saved parkland and the physical fabric of The Rocks, Victoria Street, Woolloomooloo, Centennial Park and scores of heritage buildings in Sydney. The Green Bans were based on the principle that people should be involved in the planning of their communities, and each Ban was imposed in partnership with strong community action groups. The Green Bans gave residents breathing space to work on solutions. In the case of Kellys Bush, it took 13 years of campaigning before the Labor government, led by Neville Wran, bought the land.

This much of the story has often been told. But I wanted to know more about these local women. What aspects of the struggle had been downplayed, disappeared or merely forgotten? In the spirit of investigating major cultural changes that had their birth at the same time as Kaldor Public Art Projects, I explored three boxes of Battlers' archives in the State Library of NSW, visited

Kellys Bush and the local Hunters Hill museum, and spoke to people who remember the battle.

In the archives, the Battlers for Kellys Bush are variously described as a group of "middle-class housewives", "just a pack of bloody housewives", the "blue rinse set", and "prim and proper ladies" who "fluttered" around Jack Munday.

The Battlers were indeed middle-class and nearly all were involved in full-time work in the home. But according to their own accounts, once the campaign took off, they threw aside routines and devoted themselves to saving the land with what one described as "evangelical zeal".

Well-known Sydney landscape architect Michael Leahy is the son of the late Battlers' secretary Kath Leahy. He remembers that his mother, an amateur actor and environmentalist, relished the campaign. She hated housework because her own mother had been a stickler for it, endlessly scrubbing wooden floors.

Dr Joan Croll is the only surviving battler and also a lifelong environmentalist. She was recognised with an Order of Australia for her pioneering work in breast cancer and mammography. Despite these other achievements, she describes her involvement in saving Kellys Bush as the "the most important thing I ever did." Coming from a conservative background, she initially "had a fit" when she thought she was meeting a "true red person". She decided to withdraw until

# Anzac And The Other

I've always avoided Anzac and Remembrance Day Ceremonies. The men in my family avoided them: they did their duty, then they turned their thoughts from war. They didn't march, they didn't identify as ex-military, and the further in the past their service the less comfortable they were with Anzac Day.

In a storm during a battle, escorting an Arctic convoy, one of my maternal uncles saw an overheating shell stuck in a gun barrel which had contracted because of the intense cold. Vaulting over a rail on a violently rolling deck, he grabbed the shell and threw it overboard. My grandmother told me this in the context of his athleticism. He never mentioned the incident.

Rupert Murdoch has so vulgarised the media that one forgets his father Keith Murdoch's *Melbourne Herald* had been reporting on the behaviour of the fascists, even in the arts pages, long before war was declared in 1939. Melbourne like my family had been reading about the treatment of European Jews and of dissenters; my uncles and my father joined up because they had thought about what these incidents meant for the democracy they valued.

My protestant uncles were very conventional, my Catholic father and his brother more progressive. Dad had been at a ski lodge when war was declared in 1939, and told me that when other people began to celebrate, he went outside alone, wondering why anyone would be pleased to have to go to war. He was scathing of the RSL's lobbying power; of an Anzac Day that became an excuse for drunkenness, a celebration of militarism itself. His contempt towards the notion of "heroes" derived from his brother's experience in the War.

At the fall of Singapore, Uncle John and his men became prisoners of war of the Japanese. Uncle John's stories of the various camps and the events therein were sophisticated, often amusing, always reminding us that the Japanese soldiers were in a rigid authoritarian system and behaved according to their cultural understandings and material circumstances. Yes, he and his men were starving, but that meant that the Allies had breached their supply lines; and the Japanese too were short of food and medical supplies. He discussed systems established to assist everyone to survive, he described certain incidents in quite a lot of distressing detail. These stories were always told to instruct me: *principle is more important than advancement; lead from the middle; never ask anyone to do anything you wouldn't do yourself; people should be understood from their own point of view.*

When relatively young, Uncle John had a disabling stroke, and my father assisted him to apply for a pension. The Department of Veterans Affairs refused the application, on the basis that stress was not a factor in the condition. Dad wrote to the POW newsletter asking if anyone recalled him sustaining any head injuries. Yes. An officer's duty is to protect his subordinates, so when a Japanese soldier was beating one of his men, he stepped between them, or if they'd been knocked down, Uncle John lay on top of them and took the blows of the rifle butts on his head.

My first husband enthusiastically joined the army, was sent to New Guinea and the Celebes, cheerfully killed the enemy in hand-to-hand combat, and then with his mates killed a group of Japanese soldiers who had surrendered to them, and with whom they had camped for several days.

Later, sent to Japan with the occupying force, he heard about and saw the effects of the Hiroshima bomb. First the blinding flash of light - and the victim, if facing the explosion, was immediately disabled. Then the intense wave of heat, blistering the skin wherever it was exposed, scorching clothes, then the shock wave ripping open blisters and burning cloth. The radioactivity killed all bacteria, and he saw the dreadful irony: those who arrived to help brought infection with them. He walked among men and women who had lived through the trauma, lying in silk hammocks, burned, suppurating, waiting to die. He considered what he had done and seen, and became an anti-war activist. He did not celebrate on Anzac Day.

Uncle John lived with us after the War as his life returned to its planned trajectory; and spent hours with me, a small child. I don't need Anzac Day to remember him. So when I moved to a small rural village where the annual Anzac ceremony occupies the minds of locals, I was not keen to attend. But after a couple of years it seemed impolite, and this year I watched as a photograph of a local who served in the Australian Imperial Force was presented to hang in the supper room beside those of other locals who'd been servicemen. The family summed up that contented and unremarkable post-war life, and I found myself wishing that Uncle John might be so remembered. For a moment, I imagined memorialising him, his service, his sacrifice.

And then I realised: this ceremony, these photographs, don't refer to sacrifice, or character, or even the war. These perfectly pleasant people are having an annual get together, with encouragement and funding from the Federal Government

and Local Government. It's about memory, but the memory is not of battles or comrades dying in an Asian jungle. It's about living in this district, belonging to this district, coming from this district. Only those connected to this place, the settler occupation of this place, are here enshrined.

That's the reason John Howard, Tony Abbott, and the bunch of non-combatants who, pumping money into the extravagant ridiculous reconstruction of the Australian War Memorial, starving other galleries and museums, have commercialised Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. It's a blind. It's a brilliant blind. Anzac celebrations announce that unless you're a local, with some connection to a serviceman, you're not *one* of us.

It's a way of othering all the European refugees, the migrants, holocaust victims, the people who left chaos in Asia, South America, for the stability and opportunities Australia offers. This perverse annual public celebration of belonging subverts the multicultural narrative, it encourages the vanilla settler image of nation, it is an annual way of asking for a public commitment to that image. To honour the men in my family who went to war, I won't be there next year.

Judith Pugh



With occasional diversions into political activism and other more mundane activities, Judith Pugh has spent her life in the arts; she now writes in *Regional NSW*.

other resident activists, the Battlers felt shocked and fearful when she disappeared. Some of them had also received threatening phone calls.

Nielsen described the women as being "13 local ladies ranging in outlook and temperament from very conservative to ever so slightly militant." She observed their determination and "endless trust" in the BLF.

Michael Leahy recalls that his parents could have been called "Fabian Socialists" and had attended meetings against Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

However, some Battlers were forced to stand up to conservative husbands who drank in their local pub when they got off the ferry from work in the city. There were violent arguments at some local events. One woman noted that her embarrassed husband turned down invitations that he thought would involve arguments. Some experienced being treated with derision by old friends, and false allegations were made about them. Monica Sheehan later compared the situation to "Northern Ireland". But support for the Battlers only grew. Local Labor party activists like Rod Cavalier, who went on to become a Minister in a NSW Labor government, was very involved.

In June 1971, 200 children from primary and secondary schools in Hunters Hill and Chatwood marched to Kellys Bush, led by the school band. They bore banners, "We don't want a jungle of concrete" and "Save Kellys Bush" and booed the Local Liberal MP Peter Coleman. Leahy remembers that this was very controversial but the Battlers were unfazed.

Over time, the Battlers came to understand that there had been a "shitty deal" behind the scenes to sell the land. In this sense, the threat to Kellys Bush involved a classic Sydney property deal. When the Battlers discovered that the NSW government and local Council had actively sought a buyer for Kellys Bush, Monica Sheehan wrote that Jennings should not make a profit out

of the speculation. Defamation laws made it hard to talk about these matters publicly until Labor MP George Petersen made a single statement under parliamentary privilege. He accused the Minister of increasing the value of the land by rezoning it. Rather than buying it more cheaply for the public, he had made "a gift of more than \$400,000 to one of the government's friends".

The Battlers were not just interested in their own small world of Hunter's Hill. They were part of the Coalition of Resident Action Groups (CRAG) who defended the Green Bans, after the militant NSW BLF leadership was deposed by building industry bosses and the Federal branch of their own union. Juanita Nielsen reported on a meeting where they publicly offered to be there with other groups to confront the bulldozers.

The thirteen Kellys Bush Battlers were nearly all "middle class housewives" but they were far more than that. Like others who were involved in the Greens bans, their lives were transformed through action.

When I walked through Kellys Bush this week, I heard birds and the water gently lapping on rocks. In the distance was the roar of planes. It's a work in progress to preserve the physical heritage of Kellys Bush as part of the commons. But the social relations that fought for and saved it are obscured. 50 years on, there's a strong case for commissioning a major public art project to memorialise this significant site of post-invasion land conservation.

Wendy Bacon



Wendy Bacon has been an urban activist and journalist since 1969. She is a non practising lawyer & was previously the Professor of Journalism at the University of Technology Sydney.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM THE EXTRA! EXTRA! LETTER BOX 09/12/19

From David C -

Dear Editor - in a "good-hearted" way I'd like to ask for more writing about our Federal Government's walking away from adequate support for creativity + the Arts in Australia.

I think there needs to be discussion of the Universities success at owning and "ring fencing" creative sector within their business model. These two changes in Australia are really eroding our opportunities + souls

Dear Editor ☺,

As one would say "Art is not just about fashion, vision or expression. Art is the way of life, it is the revolution of invention and evolution." Art is infinite, it is the cycle of expression and life. Love is art and Art is love.

-AK

The printer is really cool and an excellent alternative to normal printing! How can we showcase this on a bigger scale? How can we make the printer more public? The printer looks scary + corporate but the art is fun!



THE MINISTRY OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
&  
TRANSPORT  
&  
INFRASTRUCTURE



Dear Editor -  
I would like to know the thinking of the Federal Government in merging the ministries of Art and Transport. Are they wanting to get more poems and paintings on planes and boats and trains, perhaps on motorway overpasses as well? Or are they just madly ignorant and irresponsible about the necessity of Art in our society? Please investigate. Thanks for the paper. Christina

Dear Editor,  
I know that you've been busy editing things but sometimes you just want a break so go for it.  
from Charlotte Flett

## THANK YOU

Thanks to everyone who posted Letters to the Editor - we've loved rummaging through our letterbox each week. And a big shout-out to artist and journalist Mickie Quick who (assisted by The Editor Himself) built the custom **EXTRA!EXTRA!** plywood postbox that received all your mail.

