

openbook

Debra Adelaide
Reality's fiction

Rick Morton
On kindness

Jamie Marina Lau
Novel thinking



WINTER 2021







Log Pile Bouldering, Adam Pretty, Getty Images, winner of the 2020 World Press Photo Contests, 1st prize, Sports, Singles — Georg climbs a log pile while training for bouldering, in Kochel am See, Bavaria, Germany

Openbook is designed and printed on the traditional and ancestral lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. The State Library of NSW offers our respect to Aboriginal Elders past, present and future, and extends that respect to other First Nations people. We celebrate the strength and diversity of NSW Aboriginal cultures, languages and stories.



A new gallery will put photography on permanent display, page 18

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COVER

From *The Song Oblivion*, 1972, by George and Charis Schwarz, see page 46

Please note: The opinions expressed in this magazine do not represent those of the State Library of NSW



Self-portrait by Dr John Vallance

We are all born with a full aviary, and we need to learn how to catch the right metaphorical bird by asking and answering questions..

Welcome to *Openbook*

These days almost every institution worth its salt has an ‘in-flight’ magazine. The genre originates in the seat back pocket along with the sick bag, and for generations has encouraged tired travellers to reflect on the mass attractions and retail opportunities that await their arrival. More recently, the glossy journal is used to encourage philanthropic support for cash-starved museums, galleries and libraries.

Openbook is not your typical in-flight magazine. Our contributors – drawn from the staff of the Library and beyond – fly you to unexpected and often poorly understood destinations. Socrates once proposed that the human mind is like a huge aviary in which every existing piece of knowledge is represented by a bird. We are all born with a full aviary, and we need to learn how to catch the right metaphorical bird by asking and answering questions.

It’s about encouraging curiosity. All people, by nature, desire to understand – even if St Augustine condemned curiosity as second only to the sins of the flesh. Our Library itself could be thought of as a huge aviary; the new catalogue, which is due to come online at the beginning of July, will make it easier for us all to find our birds. New galleries will make it easier to walk in and get a sense of our ornithological wonders.

Openbook is an in-flight monument to curiosity, through its embrace of difference, breadth, enthusiasm, analysis and surprise. Not to mention fish pie.

I hope you enjoy the third issue.

**Dr John Vallance FAHA
State Librarian**



Letters

Dyarubbin

Only weeks after the most recent floods along the Dyarubbin (Hawkesbury–Nepean), and as a resident of the area, I read Marika Duczynski’s article ‘Following the River’ with a mixture of sadness and hope. For centuries, settlers and governments have ignored the spiritual and environmental significance of the Dyarubbin. Meanwhile, the history of the Darug and the violence they were subjected to have been ignored and replaced with an ideological version that praises the deeds of settlers as if they were ignorant to the role they played. The more we are offered articles in the vein of Duczynski’s, and books such as Grace Karskens’ *People of the River*, the more hope there is that future generations can restore the values and history of the Darug people and return the Dyarubbin to its place as one of the great river systems of the world.

Angela Long

openbook *obsessions*

more letters ...

Banned in Boston

Congratulations on this excellent publication. The article on censorship reminds me ... As an ex-collector of numismatic material I still have what is known as the Educational Series. In 1896 a series of three banknotes was issued in the US with the intention of helping educate the masses. They carry neoclassical themes and are thought by many numismatists to be the most beautiful banknotes ever printed in the US. However, the society ladies of Boston were horrified that one of the notes depicted a woman with bare breasts. They raised such a furore that some banks refused to handle these obscene (or to any sensible person, these tasteful, classical representations) banknotes (hence the expression 'banned in Boston'). So the intended series ended right there. From a reader who falls into all three of your main groups.

David Greatorex

Disappointing

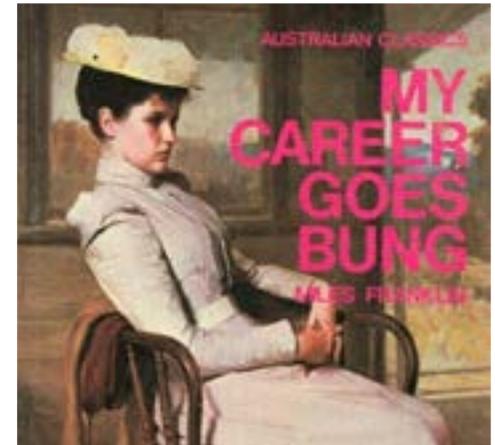
I have been a friend of the library for many years. The best part was the magazine. It was academic in style yet concisely and lucidly written. It limited itself mainly to the work of the Library. Regrettably *Openbook* has forsaken this approach and tries to be all things to all people. Sure, the causes are worthy but they are canvassed every day in the mass media. When they arise in connection with the Library's work then they should be referenced, but now they have become the principal subject. Why do we now have a fiction and a poetry section? Other journals already examine those disciplines. Please get back to an academic focus on the work of the Library.

Dr John Hughes



Biography

Writer, broadcaster and self-proclaimed 'stickybeak' Caroline Baum has interviewed some of the world's most celebrated authors. On her new podcast, *Life Sentences*, she talks with Australian biographers about their craft, setbacks and breakthroughs.



Brilliance

Marking its 75th anniversary is Miles Franklin's 1946 novel *My Career Goes Bung*, the neglected sequel to her much-earlier instant classic *My Brilliant Career*. It continues the story of Franklin's wilful, talented and witty heroine Sybylla Melvyn.



Book chat

Writers festivals are back this winter, so head to the NSW South Coast for StoryFest (18–20 June), to the Northern Rivers region for Byron Writers Festival (6–8 August) or, if wine country is more your thing, Mudgee Readers' Festival (21–22 August).



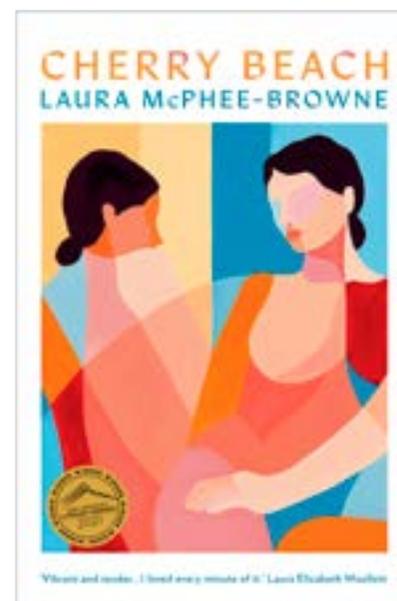
Bard

With a Lady Macbeth ace up your sleeve and a pair of Romeo kings in your pocket, you'll be onto a winner with this beautifully illustrated set of playing cards featuring 54 of Shakespeare's most famous characters. Find them here: shop.sl.nsw.gov.au



Photo by Leah Jing

L A U R A McPhee-Browne



A debut novelist observes a common peril.

We come to visit Laura, who is unaware we are there. We watch her, we can hear her thoughts, and look at the heart inside her chest.

We are welcome here, she would tell us, if she knew. She likes to make sure people feel comfortable; in fact, she can't bear it if they're not. She is sensitive, you see, to their experience of her, their experience of the world – she is dependent on their peace.

Laura has been working on herself. Not because she has wanted to and has the space inside her to move about within, but because she has been forced to. She is an alcoholic – don't worry, she doesn't mind the term – and an alcoholic suffers unless she works on herself. She is also a writer, and you could say the same thing about them.

Last year, in 2020, just before the world fell to its knees, Laura's debut novel was published. She had been

excited to have her book among the people, to have an audience, to be admired and to have an accomplishment that everyone could hold and see. Laura thought she was innocent, despite her drive for recognition. She was wrong.

The year was hard. Laura cried, and raged, and felt such self-pity and anger and sadness and grief that, at times, she thought she might die. She has had to admit that she is powerless – over alcohol, over readers, over other writers and other people, over the way the world will jump and dive, whether she wants it to or not. She has had to try and approach the barrage of thoughts (*What if they think I care too much? What if they think I don't care at all? What if they think I think I deserve something? What if it's not about deserving at all?*) with love and acceptance, with detachment. Laura thought she was a pacifist, but really she is bloodthirsty and wild.

Laura is learning. As we can see, if we peer at her chest and see the heart there, Laura is still breathing, Laura's heart is still beating. She has realised

the only way is loving kindness, because she understands why she cried and raged and cursed and wallowed, and she wants to take care of herself.

It is difficult to let go of other people's experiences, of their opinions, and the thoughts in their heads, the hearts in their chests. People mean a lot to Laura, but they also consume her. She is learning now, and trying now, to control less and trust more and it's helping.

We are near Laura and can hear her thinking. It's quiet, just a murmur inside her head, because she is tired. She is telling herself something, something small but important, something unequivocally true. *There's only me*, she says to herself, *and I am responsible for nothing but my own heart, my own beat. There's only me, there's only me, there's only you.*

In the 2021 NSW Premier's Literary Awards, Laura McPhee-Browne's *Cherry Beach* won the UTS Glenda Adams Award for New Writing and was shortlisted for the Christina Stead Prize for Fiction.

New chapters

On diversity, discomfort and the turning of a new page for the Australian publishing industry.

When Radhiah Chowdhury set out to investigate the current state of the Australian publishing landscape, she did not expect it to change so dramatically. As the recipient of the prestigious Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship, Chowdhury was due to travel to the United Kingdom to garner what lessons in diverse and inclusive publishing we might have to learn from our industry big brother.

But, as she says, ‘There are plans, and then there’s a global pandemic.’

As 2020 unfolded, we saw a steady stream of doom and gloom narratives emerging from the Australian publishing industry – stories cataloguing battling Aussie bookshops, cancelled writers’ festivals and launch-less debut authors. This news came off the back of longer-term narratives around falling sales, dwindling arts funding, declining author incomes and – a festival favourite – the very future of the book itself.

Unperturbed, Chowdhury did what many of us were called on to do and turned to video

calls, connecting with BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) professionals from across the British publishing spectrum. As her conversations were underway, George Floyd was murdered by police in Minneapolis reigniting the Black Lives Matter movement across the globe.

‘Suddenly,’ she writes, ‘the calls for representative publishing, for decolonising the white, middle-class industry that is Western publishing ... moved to the very forefront of how we as a global industry think of publishing today. And just as suddenly, the conversations I had been privileged to be a part of became more poignant, more urgent, and more desperately needed than ever before.’

Far from bringing the industry to a standstill, however, the changes and conversations prompted by these events presented a call to action for many in the Australian publishing sector.

‘If anything, 2020 reinforced something that a lot of us in the industry would recognise,

WORDS Rebecca Slater



which is the importance of books and the value they bring – whether for education or for entertainment or for escape,’ says James Kellow, Managing Director of newly established publishing house Ultimo Press. ‘Books really fulfilled an important role and, in many respects, that’s a great platform to start a new business.’

Launched in September 2020, Ultimo Press emerged just as new sales data began to tell a different – and surprisingly optimistic – story. Popular online retailer Booktopia declared a staggering 506% increase in its earnings for the six months to the end of December, and bookstores across the country were reportedly gearing up for their ‘best Christmas ever’.

To step into Ultimo Press’ offices in the hip, industrial inner-Sydney suburb from which it takes its name is to shrug off any preconception of the struggling publishing house. With its fresh design aesthetic and publishing catalogues that look and feel like limited-edition art prints, the press has all the swagger of the new kid on the block.

However, the choice to launch Ultimo Press was not solely an economically opportunistic one. Backed by Melbourne-based publishers, Hardie Grant, the company saw potential for a new independent press to respond to the current cultural moment.

‘There’s obviously a lot of talk about diversity and new perspectives and fresh ways of thinking – and that’s a role that independent publishers particularly provide in the Australian marketplace,’ Kellow says. ‘So it felt really relevant to be setting up a publishing house with a particular focus on stories and storytelling that was coming from a different perspective, was prepared to take a few more risks, and give a platform to authors in a way that’s slightly different to the experience you might get in the bigger houses.’

But while Ultimo Press may pit itself as the younger, more agile David against the larger, more sluggish publishing Goliath, CEO of Hachette Australia, Louise Sherwin-Stark, is eager to show that larger commercial Australian publishing houses are also responding to the clarion call of the present moment. ‘Last year saw change on every single front,’ she says, adding that a focus on acquiring and publishing more inclusively has become a key driver for the company.

This journey was initiated well before 2020, she says, by two publishers: Robert Watkins – who has since, in the spirit of healthy inter-publisher competition, been poached by Ultimo Press – and Vanessa Radnidge. ‘We didn’t really have a defined strategy at that point, but we could see the commercial potential of these books, and we could see the importance of publishing books that spoke to all Australian readers.’

Early successes for the company included titles such as Maxine Beneba Clarke’s memoir *The Hate Race*, Michael Mohammed Ahmad’s debut novel *The Lebs* and Claire G. Coleman’s speculative novel *Terra Nullius* – all of which were eagerly embraced by Australian booksellers and readers, scored listings for some of the country’s most esteemed literary awards, and saw their authors rapidly signed up for follow-up books. Indeed, Beneba Clarke released her new book for children *When We Say Black Lives Matter* at the end of 2020, Ahmad’s new novel *The Other Half of You* was published in May, and Coleman’s personal reflection on colonialism *Lies, Damned Lies* is due out in September.

Hachette has since adopted a series of more formal internal strategies, including Hachette UK’s ‘Changing the Story’ program of training and community outreach initiatives, as well as establishing a series of external partnerships, such as with the State Library of Queensland’s black&write! writing fellowships and, more recently, with Future Women.

When I speak to Sherwin-Stark on a Friday afternoon, she’s just stepped out of a digital ‘Inside the Publishing House’ event hosted in collaboration with the Emerging Writers’ Festival, and is about to step into an online pitching session direct with 50 unpublished and unagented authors.

‘It’s really important to acquire outside the normal acquisition process,’ she says. ‘I think agents have assumptions about what publishers are looking for, and publishers have assumptions based on what sold previously through booksellers, and it’s by breaking down those traditional pathways that you’re going to find more unique and interesting stories.’

But the company isn’t the only major publisher to have made assertive changes to the way they publish and acquire books. Last August, long-standing independent Australian publisher



Nakkiah Lui, photo by Johnny Diaz Nicolaidis

Allen & Unwin took a different route to tackling the issue of diversity in their publishing model when it announced its new imprint JOAN. Helmed by Gamillaroi/Torres Strait Islander writer, actor and director Nakkiah Lui and named after Lui's maternal grandmother, JOAN seeks to 'create space for the voices that get pushed to the fringes'. The imprint will commission titles across all genres and we can expect to see the first titles announced this year.

'The value of Nakkiah joining Allen & Unwin is manifold,' says publisher Kelly Fagan, who was involved in kickstarting the initiative in-house. 'Not only does she bring her network, her reputation, her imagination and her artistic lens, but the creation of her imprint, JOAN, is a chance for Allen & Unwin to explore new ways of publishing — new ways of doing publishing, new ways of thinking through the business of publishing, new ways of interrogating what publishing is, in Australia today and beyond.'

While such statements seem to paint a boldly hopeful vision of an industry looking forward to the future while redressing the failures of the past, Chowdhury believes the sector still has a long way to go. Having spent the better part of last year compiling and submitting her Fellowship research, she shares her observations with me.

'The increased access to publication for authors of colour is good to see, as well as their increased representation among some — though not all — of the local and international literary awards,' Chowdhury says. 'But from the publisher side, to be frank, I don't think there's justification for any celebration. Publishers need to be diversifying their workforce at least the same rate as they are acquiring diverse authors. Otherwise, these works and authors are publishing into a vacuum and their longevity in the market isn't sustainable.'

A commissioning editor and senior audio producer at Penguin Random House Australia by day, Chowdhury is informed, incisive and unapologetic in her observations about the industry she has worked in — and struggled against — for almost a decade, but also not without a certain rebellious sense of humour (feedback on her report, for instance, should be directed to beatrice.davis.goes.brown@gmail.com).

If meaningful and sustainable change is to be achieved, Chowdhury says, the industry must look beyond 'a few token PR moves', and begin the hard work of enacting a deep, systemic overhaul — starting at the top.

'There's no shortage of FNPOC [First Nations and People of Colour] who are keen to enter the industry, but so few of us manage to stick around, let alone climb the very slow (almost non-existent) ladder of career progression. We need a top-down approach — more senior FNPOC staff scaffold a subsequent intake of junior staff because they have mentors and advocates in a company, and somewhere to aspire to. More FNPOC staff in general alleviates the burden of representation on one or two people, and addresses the white cultural bias of a company.'

This 'burden of representation' was a recurring feature of many of the interviews and conversations Chowdhury conducted with industry friends and colleagues, both in Australia and abroad, and was a motivating factor in the creation, last November, of the FNPOC in Publishing Network. Devised and launched in collaboration with *black&write!* editor Grace Lucas-Pennington and freelance editor Camha Pham, the network is a place for FNPOC professionals to 'connect, gather and support each other'.

‘We’re stronger together,’ Chowdhury says, ‘and in a space completely safeguarded from the white gaze, we can whole-heartedly support one another by honestly sharing our experiences in various contexts and companies without needing to police our tone or fearing reprisal.’

Asked to highlight where she saw positive change being led in the Australian sector, Chowdhury returned to programs such as the State Library of Queensland’s black&write! Fellowship and the work of Broome-based publishing house Magabala Books as ‘brilliant examples of initiatives that are built by the community they represent, for the community they represent’.

For CEO of Magabala Books, Anna Moulton, such small, community-based publishers provide a vital space in the Australian publishing ecosystem.

‘More than 34 years ago, our founding Elders – some of whom experienced first contact – understood the power of the written word and saw the opportunity to take back control of their stories by establishing an Aboriginal-owned and led publishing house. We have always felt strongly that Magabala is, and must remain, a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can stand in their own truths.’

The positive results of this model have been evident in the enormous commercial success and cultural impact of books such as *Dark Emu* by Bruce Pascoe, alongside critically acclaimed poetical works by Alison Whittaker, Kirli Saunders and Ali Cobby Eckermann, and a thriving children’s books list. But Moulton sees Magabala’s work as extending beyond their publishing output. ‘A lot of our initiatives focus on development and opportunity,’ she explains. ‘We are proud of our role as incubator and springboard.’

This year, for instance, the publisher will open applications for its first ever Indigenous Publishing Cadetship, which seeks to provide employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the industry, and recently launched a new mid-career Fellowship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers.

Asked to cast her eye out over to the broader publishing landscape in Australia, Moulton observes: ‘This is an exciting moment for diverse voices. A different literary landscape suddenly seems possible in this country. It is a moment we have long worked towards and we hope is sustained.’

‘We’re stronger together, and in a space completely safeguarded from the white gaze, we can whole-heartedly support one another by honestly sharing our experiences in various contexts and companies without needing to police our tone or fearing reprisal.’

But though she is hopeful about the industry’s willingness to adapt and change, like Chowdhury, she also remains cautious. ‘Given the current pace of the shift and the nature of the market, however, we remain somewhat wary. Our publisher Rachel Bin Salleh talks about ethical publishing as “slow cooked publishing” and we are particularly conscious that market demand can create pressure to turn books around quickly, and this can be to the detriment of the author and their community ...’

We saw the consequences of rushing such work earlier this year in the announcement of the Ultimo Prize. Open to writers under 30, it asked writers to reflect on the theme of ‘identity’. However, as members of the online literary community were quick to argue, while the prize called on young, diverse writers to reflect on their selfhood, the judges reviewing this work – namely staff of Ultimo Press itself – lacked the necessary cultural and linguistic diversity to sensitively handle and assess such material.

‘I regret that we were probably moving too quickly,’ Kellow admits. ‘We wanted to get certain things in train and, clearly, we weren’t as careful as we should have been. Of course, it was disappointing, because we had the right intent. But we got it wrong and so we made an effort to move very quickly to address that.’

While admitting such mistakes is uncomfortable – particularly for a new press still trying to establish its sense of identity – Chowdhury argues that discomfort is a necessary part of the process.

‘I acknowledge and empathise with the fact that meaningful change comes with several bucketloads of discomfort,’ she says. ‘How do you get people to accept, let alone welcome, discomfort? At worst, the conversation stalls out at defensive dismissal,



James Kellow, photo by Joy Lai

but even at best, it seems to linger in the realm of an intellectual argument. But this is not an intellectual curiosity. We're literally talking about the personhood of whole swathes of the communities we live in.'

Kellow is quick to agree. Rather than shying away from criticism and difficult conversations, he says it is the responsibility of publishers to lean into this discourse. 'I think publishers always need to be listening and paying attention to the conversations going on around them. If your job as a publisher is to be representative of your country and its cultures then you have to be looking everywhere, listening everywhere.'

Whether it's looking to the lessons of the US and UK publishing industries, or tuning in to the conversations closer to home, it appears that if the Australian industry is willing to open its ears, there is no shortage of wisdom to help it move into a new chapter of publishing.

'There is much work to be done,' Moulton says, 'but there are so many amazing people making inroads. Now is the time for deep listening, humility and courage to make change happen.'

Rebecca Slater is a freelance writer and literary/arts professional.

Take **5** LIGHTHOUSES



Eden

Built on Yuin/Thaua country

Green Cape Lighthouse sits on a prominent headland next to Disaster Bay, near Eden, on the far south coast of New South Wales. Designed by James Barnet, the state's southern-most lighthouse was built between 1881 and 1883. At the time, it was one of the earliest concrete constructions to be attempted in Australia on such a scale. 'Sand was a continual problem for the builders', reported the *Australian Town and Country Journal* in May 1883. 'Over the course of a day a wind could shift a hundred tons or so in one direction, and ... the next day shift as much in an opposite direction, cutting into the workmen's eyes like shot.'

Green Cape Lighthouse, 1886, by Julian Rossi Ashton



Wollongong

Built on Dharawal country

The Breakwater Lighthouse at Wollongong Harbour is within walking distance of its newer twin, the Wollongong Head (or Flagstaff Point) Lighthouse. Designed by Edward Orpen Moriarty and built in 1871, the two Wollongong towers are the only lighthouses in New South Wales constructed from wrought iron plates on a ferro-concrete base. After falling into disrepair, the Breakwater Lighthouse was decommissioned in 1974 but has since been restored as a lighthouse museum by the local community.

Wollongong Lighthouse, c 1900-10, by Star Photo Co.



Sydney

Built on Gadigal country

This hand-coloured lithograph is one of the earliest views of the original Macquarie Lighthouse, also known as Macquarie Tower, at Sydney's South Head. Designed by convict architect Francis Greenway, it was Australia's first lighthouse, with its foundation stone laid on 11 July 1816. The exposed location quickly revealed the limitations of the soft sandstone blocks used to build it, and as early as 1823 it had started crumbling. After continued problems, the old tower was replaced in the early 1880s with a James Barnet-designed lighthouse that still stands on the site.

Sydney Lighthouse, c 1826, by Augustus Earle



Norah Head

Built on Darkinjung country

The Norah Head Lighthouse, designed by Charles Assinder Harding, was the last to be built in James Barnet's style. The light, which burnt vaporised kerosene, was officially lit on 15 November 1903 and kerosene remained the main source of fuel until it was electrified in 1961. Etched on the glass of the ground floor entrance door is the Latin saying *Olim Periculum Nunc Salus*, meaning 'Once Perilous, Now Safe'.

Norah Head Lighthouse, 1939, by Ray Olson



Cape Byron

Built on Bundjalung/Arakwal country

Cape Byron Lighthouse, on the most easterly point of mainland Australia, is the northern-most lighthouse in New South Wales. Also designed by Charles Assinder Harding, it opened in 1901 and was among the last of 25 major lighthouses built for the Marine Board of NSW as part of a planned 'highway of lights' along the state's coastline. Built using precast concrete blocks, it is almost identical to a lighthouse at Point Perpendicular at Jervis Bay. Care and management of the site was transferred to the Cape Byron Trust in 1989 and the lighthouse is now a popular tourist destination.

Inspecting the Cape Byron Lighthouse, 2017, by Dean Saffron

WORDS Steve Dow





Photographic evolution

A new Photography Gallery is the latest step in turning the Library inside out.

A red morocco case, small enough to fit in the palm of an adult's hand, houses Australia's oldest surviving photograph. Inside is a daguerreotype, a tiny, polished copper plate that was coated with silver and bathed in iodine before being inserted into a camera, exposed, and developed with mercury vapour to produce a clear, sharp image on its mirror surface.

Curator Margot Riley wears protective gloves to gingerly handle this treasure, prized chiefly for its historical importance. From photography's first appearance in Australia, she says, the new medium 'was promoted as a way of sending portraits back "home" to family and friends', but in the case of this London-born portrait sitter, photographed in Sydney circa 1845 in his mid-50s, the colony would be home for life.

Dressed in a buttoned-up suit, this man of means was unidentified when the daguerreotype finally made its way to the State Library of NSW in a trunk filled with 'random bits and pieces', says Riley. Mitchell Librarian Richard Neville would unravel the identity of the subject — who, it turned out, had once committed murder. More on this detective story in a moment.

Neville explains that the State Library collects very differently from an art gallery: 'We are acquiring works that we feel have some sort of research and documentary value — it's as much a social history as an aesthetic history.'

The Library's new Photography Gallery, due to open in the basement beneath the Mitchell Library Reading Room in mid-2022, will display the



Dr William Bland, c 1845, by George Goodman

wide-ranging physicality of the many photographic works the Library has collected from around the state, tracking two centuries of photographic evolution from daguerreotypes to calotypes, ambrotypes, stereographs, panoramas and digitised displays with examples drawn from hundreds of thousands of negatives from the twentieth century.

Demonstrations of historical photographic processes will be a feature, says State Librarian John Vallance, and the gallery will show what an early photography studio might have looked like. It will chart the rise of press and colour photography and account for the ubiquitous digital photography that has marked the twenty-first century, when everyone has a camera in their pocket and the world is awash with images.

Vallance says his aim is to turn the Library's collections inside out: to put representative parts on permanent display, making them more accessible and thus encouraging deeper research by members of the public. That goal has already been achieved elsewhere in the Library with the 'salon hang' of more than 300 landscape and portrait oil paintings, as well as in the new display of many of the Library's physical objects in the Collectors' Gallery and the recent opening of a Maps Gallery.

The Library's building program has been funded by the NSW State Government. It is the biggest capital investment in the Library in more than a quarter of a century – \$24 million over two years – to improve public access, open up collections and restore the Reading Room. A new basement auditorium for gatherings and symposia is also being built.

The Library, meanwhile, has launched a fundraising drive to develop the new Photography Gallery to permanently display more of its collection – to include, for example, more press photography from across the past century, and more works by Indigenous photographers.

The Photography Gallery will naturally include the intriguing tale of Australia's oldest surviving photograph, the little daguerreotype that arrived in a trunk. The Library's former curator of photographs, Alan Davies, quickly identified the photographer as the entrepreneurial settler George Baron Goodman, who had been trained before arriving in the colony by the inventor of this first practical process of photography, the Frenchman Louis Daguerre.

The image would have been taken in a blue glass box on a fine day in Goodman's Daguerreotype Gallery in the roof of the former Royal Hotel in Sydney's George Street, which was taken over by Dymocks bookstore a century ago.

'Alan knew that Goodman always used this particular [morocco] case and that Goodman always packed his daguerreotypes with playing cards, and sure enough at the back were these playing cards,' says Richard Neville. 'However, we didn't really know who [the sitter] was, it was just an unidentified bloke.'

Then Neville remembered a watercolour portrait of the London-born Doctor William Bland in the Library's collection, painted in the mid-to-late 1840s and attributed to artist Richard Read. As a pardoned convict, Bland's transportation for mortally wounding a man in a duel was long behind him as he became a surgeon and parliamentarian in the new colony.

The sitter in the watercolour portrait strikes the same pose – it had obviously been painted with this daguerreotype as reference. 'I thought: "Oh gees, they're one and the same",' says Neville. 'Then Alan had seen a reference in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in January 1845 to the photo being taken.'

The Library holds an array of works by such twentieth-century photographic masters as Max Dupain, May Moore, Lewis Morley and William Yang. Questions remain around the way negatives are displayed, however, says Neville, given mass digitisation can't quite replicate the 'distinctive, high contrast tonality' that Dupain, for example, insisted on in his prints. But the Library also has a significant collection of Dupain's own prints.

Cultural context is important, too, and the German-born photographer John William Lindt's photographs of Indigenous people around the Grafton area are a case in point. 'Most of our records of Aboriginal people



Family dinner, c 1890s, by Joseph Check

are by Europeans who were in the process of some kind of ethnographic documentation,' says Neville.

Neville's personal favourites from the Library include the Holtermann collection of glass plate negatives discovered in a garden shed in Chatswood in 1951. The 3500 negatives document the goldfields era of a century earlier, with great incidental detail including people captured by the camera outside shops or signs posted in windows. Many of these images have been digitised for online viewing.

Margot Riley lays out some memento mori from the Holtermann collection: examples of the post-mortem photography that was a cultural imperative in an age of high infant mortality, one showing the body of an unidentified dead baby and the other the corpse of a woman laid out before a funeral.

Then there is the fashion photography of Sydney's Rob Hillier, capturing the stylised modernity of the 1930s and 1940s, or the more

humble examples of images that tell their own story about how we want to be remembered.

In one staged late nineteenth century image taken by photographer Joseph Check, who was active in the Richmond–Lismore area, a family sits down at a dinner table about to eat a Sunday roast. A magnesium flash would have been required inside. Firing the flash, dust would have flown and landed all over the food, rendering the lunch inedible and exposing the limitations of the era's photographic processes.

The photographs themselves, like the painting and physical object collections put on permanent display before them, will be only 'lightly curated', promises John Vallance. 'We don't want to tell people what to think; we don't want to tell people how to interpret stuff. We want to say, "OK, here's what we have, we hope you get interested and pursue it further".'

Steve Dow is an award-winning arts journalist.



Photography Appeal

To support the Photography Appeal, please visit sl.nsw.gov.au/appeal or call 02 9273 1488. All donations are tax deductible and will go towards specialist conservation, digital and physical storage, and public presentation of the Library's photography collections.

WORDS Winnie Dunn

A glossary of tapu terms

(inspired by Amrita Hepi)



Winnie Dunn is a writer of Tongan descent from Mt Druitt in Western Sydney. She is the General Manager of Sweatshop Literacy Movement and the editor of several critically acclaimed anthologies, most notably *Sweatshop Women*, which is Australia's first and only publication produced entirely by women of colour. Her work has been published in the *Sydney Review of Books*, *The Saturday Paper* and many other publications. She is now working on her debut novel as the recipient of a CAL Ignite grant.

Winnie's grandmother Losē Po'uliva'ati was born in Malapo, a small village in the eastern district of Tongatapu on the island of Tonga. Winnie came to the State Library to look at maps and books that show Tonga through the eyes of missionaries and other colonists. This glossary of tapu (taboo) terms is her response.

Winnie Dunn, photo by Tyler Aves



'A Cannibal Feast in Fiji, 1869: The meat, the fire, and the cooks', from *Brown Men and Women*, 1898, by Edward Reeves

Cannibal

1. "Thus says the Lord God: Because they say to you, "You devour people, and you bereave your nation of children," therefore you shall no longer devour people and no longer bereave your nation of children, declares the Lord God. And I will not let you hear anymore the reproach of the nations, and you shall no longer bear the disgrace of the peoples and no longer cause your nation to stumble, declares the Lord God.' – Ezekiel 36:13-15
2. The English reproached us for consuming the flesh of our own. The English called it forbidden. Called us cannibal. Used this ancient act as a reason to have their blond-headed, blue-eyed Jesus destroy our Old Gods. But the more they taught us, the more we asked: Is your Jesus not a human sacrifice? Hasn't the consumption of his flesh and the spilling of his blood saved you all from hell?
3. King Tu'i Tonga was humbled by the couple Fevanga and Fefafa because they sacrificed their only daughter, Kava kilia mai Faa'imata (a leper), as an offering to him. From her grave grew the first kava and sugar cane plants. Our King, Tu'i Tonga, is a descendant from our original God. Kava for the king. Sugar for the peasants. See too how our human sacrifices save us?

4. When White people eat other humans, it is called colonisation.

Chapel

A four-walled room with a high ceiling and a door. We have never seen a structure like this before the palangi invaded. They erected these strange monuments on our lands, which moved heaven beyond our reach. This is to be expected for us savages. We have yet to earn their forgiveness.

Collection

How can I reclaim the stories written about my ancestors when they are kept in state-sanctioned private collections? Why does something written in the 1800s have more significance than the voices of my ancestors passed down to me?

Cocoanut

The only time the English couldn't tell the difference between white flesh and brown flesh.

Feejee

Even when ancient Tongans enslaved ancient Fijians ... stealing their person, their labour and their art ... at least we knew their real names.

Fie palangi

In Tongan, we have a phrase for the phenomenon where people of colour want to be White.



Illustration from map *The Kingdom of Tonga*, c 1979



'Semilesi in Her Native Dress', from *Brown Men and Women*, 1898, by Edward Reeves

Fonuamomoko

1. An infertile piece of land.
2. An infertile Tongan woman (e.g. Winnie Dunn).

Friendly Islands

Little did Cook know we were planning to spear him like 'ota (fish) when he sailed on too soon. Little did Cook know that the Hawaiians he invaded after us were ancient Tongans so, in a way, we still had the honour of killing him.

Gold escort

1. Any Pasifika woman who willingly dates a White man.
2. Any Pasifika man who willingly dates a White woman.

Heathen

The White man calls us this in all of his books. He does not know that he has made us this way.

Hina

Ancient goddess of the moon who moves saltwater and bathes in freshwater.

Horse

In Tongan, a fai hoosi is a horse fucker. This is what we became when we gave ourselves to a blond-headed, blue-eyed Jesus.

Implanon

I purposely made myself infertile. Every three years, Doctor Yu at Rooty Hill Medical and Dental Centre cuts open the inner-side of my upper left arm and inserts a small plastic rod that stops me from ovulating

and sperm from invading my uterus. A Tongan woman is only meant to have sex for procreating. Never for pleasure. Yet, my Implanons have seen me through one-night stands, fourth-date sex in the back of cars and two long-term relationships that bled into each other like my infrequent period. Sometimes I wonder if what my people say is true. That the uterus is a piece of Tongan land meant to grow and pass on to the children I could carry inside of me. What does it mean now that I've made it barren?

Map

The palangi think that drawing on paper means they can own the world.

Map-making

This is a process us Tongans know the best. We saw Maui's hook in the sky and discovered how our original gods left marks there to show us the islands they fished for us from under the sea. The stars matched the patterns of our fingers and palms.

Maui

An ancient demigod from the loins of Tangaloa, our original god. Maui pulled up our coral islands with a fish hook, threw coral boulders at birds that woke him up too early, and smeared the head of an eel on the trunk of a tree in order to feed us for eternity.

Missions

1. A holy way to subdue the natives.
2. Christianity was propagated to us by sexual means. Our legs were spread open so that the Holy Spirit could be transmitted to us. From our bodies grew chapels.

Native

1. In Tongan, there is no word for ‘native’ or ‘Indigenous’. The term ‘Tongan’ itself implies that I am of an original people from an original land in the South Pacific.
2. It was the White people that first differentiated themselves from us. Made their status higher than us purely through the use of language. What was White before them? What was Native before them?

Palangi / Papalangi

Our original coloniser.

Taboo

This is the English word I’m most proud of because it came from us. We created the term for what could not be done and what was forbidden. We formed the basis of our society by first outlining what we could not act upon and what we could never say. This outline was made out of respect for ourselves, for the land, for the spirits and for the gods. But I will say, the English spelling looks childish. Boo!

Tangaloa

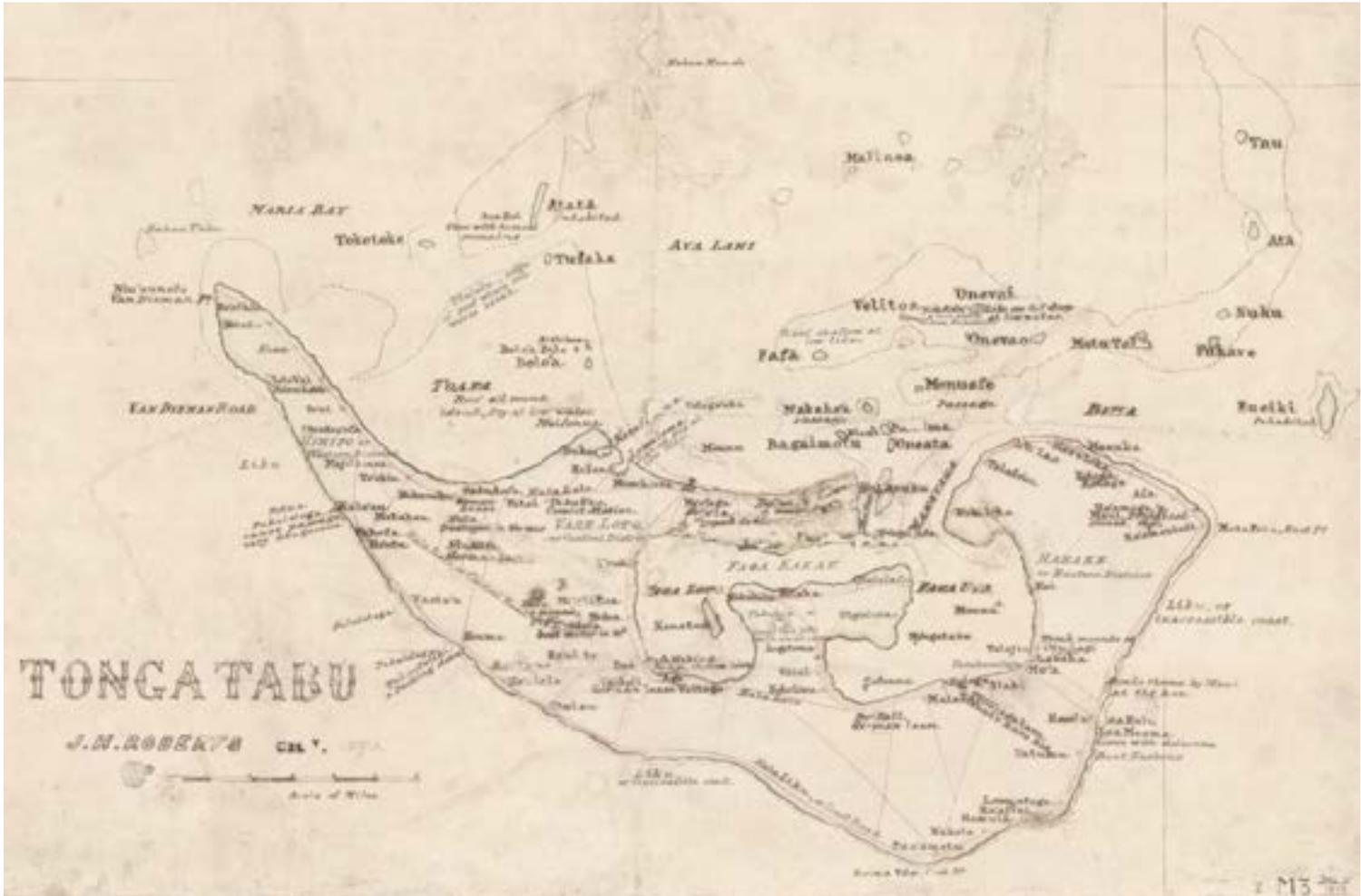
Our original god.

Tapu

1. The original meaning, spelling and spirit of what is known today as ‘taboo’ in the English language. What we consider our tapu:
 - whistling at night
 - weeping at night
 - brushing our hair at night
 - cutting our hair (unless in mourning)
 - weaving at night
 - bathing at night
 - bathing during our period
 - eating cold foods during our period
 - eating our father’s leftovers
 - to lie down next to our brothers
 - to sleep with our brothers in the same room
 - to marry our brothers and sisters (we do not have a concept of ‘cousins’)
 - to stand in the presence of King Tu‘i-tā-tui (lest we are caned at the knees)
 - to touch our father’s head
 - to reject the will of our father’s eldest sister (known as mehekitanga — a title bestowed only to women because only women can lead a family)
 - to purposefully make one’s self infertile.

How can I reclaim the stories written about my ancestors when they are kept in state-sanctioned private collections?

2. I struggle against my nana’s thick taro-like grip as she wrestles me into a kafu. ‘Fonuamomoko, fonuamomoko, fonuamomoko!’ she cries as my clenched left fist narrowly misses her jaw. The fluffy blanket with a printed pattern of purple peacocks, bought from Flemington markets, makes my breath shallow and my head sweaty. It is pulled tightly under my chin, across my throat like a noose. It is a Mt Druitt summer, where the temperature stays at 40 degrees even in the middle of the police-siren-filled night. Why was she so afraid of my womb getting cold?
3. My grandmother’s maiden name was Mapapalangi. Mapa meaning a tree with orange leaves or unlaidd turtle eggs and palangi meaning white. My grandmother’s first name was Losē meaning rose in English. These days, I wonder if God created my grandmother for the White man who sought her out. ‘Daughta. I haf daughta for you mah brotha.’ This is what I imagine my great-uncle to have said to Brian Dunn as they worked on the railroads in Auckland. The only jobs around for Fobs and English/Irishmen back in the 60s. ‘Wife. I look for wife,’ I imagine Brian would say, mimicking my great-uncle’s broken English. A trait my father has to this day when he orders Chinese takeaway at Rooty Hill or Paradise Chicken in Mt Druitt. ‘Wife. Wife. My wife,’ Brian proclaimed when he saw my grandmother — light brown skin with freckles, big black afro and calves the full curve of a crescent moon. Maybe he had grown bored of his own women. ‘If you no marry, you no life.’ My grandmother’s mehekitanga warned. Nana sobbed about how she had a boyfriend back on the islands she had wanted to marry. How only Tongan men could pass on the rights to the fonua.



Map of Tonga Tabu and nearby islands, 1893, by JH Roberts

‘I Tonga. I Tonga,’ she repeated. My grandmother knew her life with Brian was an exodus. She knew her children, and her children’s children, would have no part of Tonga to claim besides the part inside her womb.

Her mehekitanga was firm. ‘You go. Australia. Be us there. New life. New life. Sīsū bless us.’

4. Tongans were subject to the White Australia policy unless they pretended to be Māori or they were married to a White man. My grandmother did both, just to be safe. By denying Tonga, she became a tapu woman on a foreign land.

Tatau

The original meaning, spelling and spirit of what is known today as ‘tattoo’ in the English language. What we consider our tatau:

- Unknown. The ancient practice was eradicated and forgotten in Tonga due to Christian colonisation.

Tattoo

Every second cop standing at the ticket gates of Mt Druiitt station has one protruding from underneath the blue sleeve of their uniform. With their tattooed arms they fine all the Fob boys that jump the train. What a shame job to our ancient practice.

Tongatabu

1. A colonial reimagining of Tonga.
2. ‘Just under the red of sunrise on the starboard bow, dimly through the glass, silhouetted against a pale, yellow-green sky, stand, as it were, right out of the ocean, the feathery tops of cocoanut trees, and nearer, puff! puff! puff! one after the another, stretching almost a mile along the horizon, like shells fired from a line of forts and exploding in the water, leap twenty feet into the air little heaps of white spray. These are the waves breaking over a line of coral rocks, and up through submarine caves in the rocks. The first impression I feel is certainly not a grand one to record.’ (Edward Reeves, *Brown Men and Women*, 1898, p 59).



Details from *Specimens of Native Paper from Tongo [Tonga] and Fiji, sent home by John Hunt, Wesleyan missionary, 1847*

Tongatapu

1. The main island of Tonga. It is ancient and unending.
2. Just under the blue of sea on the south, dimly through the clouds, silhouetted against a pale darkness, as it were, right out of the ocean, the feather tops of nui pulled nearer to the surface – tug! tug! tug! mass after mass. Stretching to the length of an ancient turtle, its sighs like volcanoes only Tangaloa and Pele can control, turning into exploding water, leaping in faka'apa'apa of salt and foam. This is Tangaloa blessing his half-human son to lift Tonga from its depths. The first impression I feel is a miracle of creation dangling from a hook. Certainly, a grand one to record.

Tulou

'Too low! Too low!' The missionaries complain when they invade our fale (house) where we have built the ceilings within our reach. We interpret this as a sign of deep respect. 'Tulou, tulou,' we respond. 'Excuse us, excuse us.' Such is the ultimate sign of respect, to excuse ourselves on our own land to invaders.

Wesleyan

1. A personalised branch of Christianity that Tongans use to subdue each other. How can we claim to be Christian if we do not refinance our home three or four times over to give money to God via the church? How can we claim to be Christian if we do not sit for four-hour long sermons in the Western Sydney heat? How can we claim to know God if we do not drag our nine children to church every Sunday?
2. My childhood church was Tokaikolo in Granville, a suburb in Western Sydney. The church is named after the first morning star we see in Tonga.

William Dixson

1. A collector of Aboriginal, South Sea Islander, Māori, Fijian, Tongan, Sāmoan and Tahitian trauma.
2. When will our artefacts be returned to us?

On kindness

**The opposite of kindness
is not cruelty or malice.**

It is reason.

We tend to rationalise the suffering of others as if it were a condition of living. All the world is pain, we say, so we begin to rank and itemise it. There are whole projects devoted to this dispassionate logic, not least of all the ones that dwell in our own minds. We obsess over those who ‘deserve’ an alleviation of their suffering and those who, we try to tell ourselves, have brought it on themselves and must end it for themselves. We work at drawing that distinction.

It is easy to convince such a *rational* mind that this is the work of compassion; that we must save our stores of it for the ‘right’ ones.

The reality, of course, is that our hierarchy of hurt – different for every one of us according to our own experiences – is just another unfeeling algorithm. True kindness is offered without judgment. To attach caveats to caring erases the human. While each person alive on this planet is a similar collection of atoms, everything else is deeply strange and inscrutable. Our best guesses at what motivates or drives other people are like dying embers in the dead of night; feeble, revealing little.

In a *Life* magazine interview in 1963, the celebrated African-American writer James Baldwin offered an insight into how we may have mixed the signals of our own suffering. Knowing we have suffered is not the same as looking it in the eye. Kindness springs from the latter, not necessarily the former.

‘You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world,’ he said, ‘but then you read.’

‘It was Dostoevsky and Dickens who taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who ever had been alive.

Only if we face these open wounds in ourselves can we understand them in other people.’

In the past couple of months, as I tour the country talking about my new book *My Year of Living Vulnerably*, I have come to a higher appreciation of Baldwin’s words. Although my problems had haunted me most of my adult life they were only named in May 2019: complex post-traumatic stress disorder. In short, complex PTSD is caused by a lack of love. It may be a persistent but ‘low’ level of emotional neglect or abuse, or a series of acute periods of abandonment, domestic violence or fear at the hands of another. Its effects later in life are almost the same as for those whose trauma was caused by violent sexual assault, war or torture.

For 32 years, I thought my ailments and hang-ups were a species of anxiety. But the condition ran deeper even than that.

Being given a name and an understanding of what was going on behind my eyes was useful. More powerfully still, it felt like being handed special goggles that reveal the secret code written into all our lives. Speaking with others about this only confirmed the precision of the insight.

This sensation, of being able to peer into the hinterland of those around you and see the way trauma has worn tracks in their being, is akin to learning a new word and suddenly hearing it everywhere you turn for the next few weeks. This happened to me many years ago with the word *discombobulated*, which, on my personal discovery, seemed to be mentioned on television or in books or newspapers every other day. So it goes for trauma.

WORDS Rick Morton



Rick Morton, photo by Joy Lai

The poet Naomi Shihab Nye colours in Baldwin's idea in her poem *Kindness*, which has done much to lay the groundwork for the deployment of my secret goggles. She writes:

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.

This is not to say that all people who have known a bone-weary sorrow will inherit a generosity of spirit. It is not enough, as Baldwin says, to have experienced it. We must turn and look it in the face.

It is in the turning — holding our pain up to the light and examining it as a jeweller might a gemstone — that we can dismantle the defensive structures erected in our own honour. I am acutely aware that some cannot or do not make it this far. For the longest time, I thought I might be one of them.

My original hurt, spent alone at age seven on a remote cattle station alongside a father who openly cheated with a 19-year-old governess while my mother and sister were in a burns ward tending to my critically ill brother 1200 km away, shut me down. The intensity of that loneliness, the silent pleading for comfort from my father, provided the heat that could weld me closed. I wanted more from the world than this diminishment, naturally, but no longer trusted love would be forthcoming.

This is the secret sauce to trauma's longevity: mistrust. It is the liquid sand at the foundation of your life. I was almost brought undone by it.

I tried to be kind nevertheless, and frequently managed it in my early adult life. But just as often I was cynical and filled with a disturbing anger. It wasn't directed at anyone in particular but everyone at various points in time received it. Anger was like a forcefield that kept others at bay. It was the concrete dome lowered atop the Chernobyl reactor to protect what I understood to be my radioactive core; the part of me that was so grotesque that not even my father could love it.

How easy it is, in the throes of this thinking, to believe you are doing everyone else a favour. In such a holding pattern, kindness becomes a fluke rather than an outcome of your own design.

The opposite of kindness is not outright cruelty, although it is arguable that is the point of at least some of our government programs, but the tricky rubric of rationality.

I rationalised my own misery and projected the account of it on to everyone else. What I did not do, for a third of my life, was be kind to myself first.

Perhaps that is the hardest kindness.

Part of the disease of codifying the things about human nature that are not begging to be analysed in that way is that we become lost.

Take the great evolutionary biologist, mathematician and chemist George Price. Having already cracked the code of Darwin's natural selection by reducing it to a simple equation, he turned his attention to altruism. He wanted to know why it was that someone should be 'nice' or expend energy caring for someone outside their own gene pool. What evolutionary imperative could possibly explain such kindness?

Price had left his own wife and children for this pursuit, and would eventually give away everything he owned. Gripped by madness, he took his own life in a squat house in London.

It feels unkind to point out that Price was preoccupied with the wrong campaign. Intent doesn't really come into it. There is no need to account for *why* anyone is kind. It matters only that we are. Sure, it feels good. You'd need to be the owner of a black heart indeed to feel otherwise.

In *My Year of Living Vulnerably* I cite a recent Oxford University study of 683 people which revealed that it did not matter whether a random act of kindness was directed at family members, an acquaintance, a total stranger or even yourself. The results were the same: performing these acts made participants *happier*. Curiously, the study found that even the simple act of paying attention to someone else performing an act of kindness is more than enough to render us content or happy.

It is important to be clear that happiness is not something you can conjure from thin air. Much of our modern malaise — you know, apart from the indignities

of late-stage capitalism, the culture wars and the broader rise of various types of fascism — can be linked to this vague sense that we should be happy but are, in fact, not. You can't get out of bed one morning and run to the store to purchase happiness. If you could, I suspect many writers would be out of a job.

You can, however, choose to be kind. This is a necessary condition for true happiness. Not the only one, certainly, but a major one.

This is where we need to look our own suffering in the eye and come to terms with it. Now, one does not need to become best friends with suffering. There is no need to braid its hair or rent a cabin for a weekend of fishing. But we must find a place for it. We must see the way it has pressed its amorphous presence into the shape of our lives.

Failure to do so is one of the reasons it is so easy for someone to resist giving money to a homeless man, for example. 'He's just going to spend it on booze or drugs,' you can almost hear them say.

So?

In the immortal words of musical act Lazyboy: 'Wait a second. That's what *I'm* going to spend it on.'

Kindness is not a structural solution. Twenty dollars is not going to give the homeless person enough money to cover bond. It won't get them into TAFE. Being generous or simply smiling at another person isn't going to fix their broken marriage or bring back a dead relative. That almost strikes upon the point though, doesn't it? So much else is pain, we need not add to it. Perhaps we can soften its edges just a little.

If we cannot flex this muscle, the state flexes another in return.

That may seem like a strange leap to make so I want to be as clear as possible: the same mental process that sees some of us choose who is deserving of kindness, or refuse it altogether, is writ large at the scale of government policy.

We need not look far to find it.

In the welfare system mistrust is built into its common features. Robodebt grew from a latent distrust of payment recipients into a program that criminalised them. All the while, as we now know, it was *the government* that was stealing from them. Those unlawful debts were never real.

Employment services, similarly, operate on a model that forces people to spend so much time proving they are looking for work or working for free in dead-end, punishing programs that most of the multi-billion-



dollar apparatus outsourced by government to oversee them is tied up with policing these useless errands. The managers of the National Disability Insurance Scheme have swung their focus from providers of services to participants themselves and whether they are being 'compliant'. No evidence has ever existed that they are not, by the way, but that fact can't soothe the lust of a machine built to appeal to *reason*.

In other realms, too, the state privatises its duty of care to 'civil society' which is really just code for the assumption that kindness has no role in policy.

No reason is needed to be kind. Kindness is the reason. It multiplies, as if by cellular division. See how it grows.

Discussions about whether we are being kind to the 'right' people always remind me of that great climate change cartoon in which a denier of the science asks in earnest: what if we cut emissions and make the air cleaner and the world greener for nothing?

When you have been given the special vision of trauma, the knowledge of its fingerprints across the life of all those around you, you realise that it is impossible to waste kindness.

Perhaps another word for this understanding is love.

Rick Morton is an award-winning journalist, whose latest book is *My Year of Living Vulnerably*.



The First Embrace, Mads Nissen, Denmark, Politiken/Panos Pictures

World Press Photo 21

On 5 August 2020, 85-year-old Rosa Luzia Lunardi was embraced for the first time in five months — through a transparent ‘hug curtain’ — by a nurse in her care home in São Paulo, Brazil. Months earlier, aged care facilities shut their doors to visitors due to the escalating Covid crisis.

Mads Nissen’s photograph of that moment ‘The First Embrace’ has been named the World Press Photo of the Year. ‘To me, this is a story about hope and love in the most difficult times,’ the Danish photographer said. ‘When I learned about the crisis that was unfolding in Brazil and the poor leadership of president Bolsonaro who has been neglecting this virus from the very beginning, who’s been calling it “a small flu”, I really felt an urge to do something about it.’

‘If you look at the image long enough,’ said 2021 Photo Contest jury member Kevin WY Lee, ‘you’ll see wings: a symbol of flight and hope.’

The annual World Press Photo Exhibition presents the important stories about the world we live in. According to Joumana El Zein Khoury, executive director of the World Press Photo Foundation, this year’s winning images were selected for the ‘personal, human and hopeful angles visual storytellers gave to very difficult issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the Black Lives Matter protests following the murder of George Floyd.’

This year, more than 150 powerful and evocative images by 45 photographers from 28 countries are being exhibited in only a handful of galleries and institutions around the world.



Fighting Locust Invasion in East Africa, Luis Tato, Spain, for *The Washington Post* — Henry Lenayasa, chief of the settlement of Archers Post, in Samburu County, Kenya, tries to scare away a massive swarm of locusts



New Life, Jaime Culebras, Spain — the eggs of a Wiley's glass frog hang on the tip of a leaf in Tropical Andean cloud forest, near the Yanayacu Biological Station, Napo, Ecuador



California Sea Lion Plays with Mask, Ralph Pace, United States — a curious California sea lion swims towards a face mask at the Breakwater dive site in Monterey, California, USA



Port Explosion in Beirut, Lorenzo Tugnoli, Italy, *Contrasto* — a woman is carried to safety on 4 August 2020, in the devastated Gemmayzeh neighbourhood



Temple and Half-Mountain, Hkun Lat, Myanmar — a Buddhist temple occupies one half of a mountain, while the other has been carved away by heavy machinery mining for jade, in Hpakant, Kachin State, Myanmar



Rescue of Giraffes from Flooding Island, Ami Vitale, for CNN — a Rothschild's giraffe is transported to safety in a custom-built barge from a flooded Longicharo Island, Lake Baringo, in western Kenya

National Geographic photographer Ami Vitale, who documented the daring rescue of eight giraffes stuck on a flooding island in Kenya, said: 'My hope is that these images can inspire people and remind them that this is the only home we have. We have poked some big holes in our shared little life raft. What happens next is in all of our hands.'



Nowhere Near, Alisa Martynova, Russia — Nigerian woman Blessing is one of many migrants who have made the perilous and often life-threatening journey to get to Italy



Emancipation Memorial Debate, Evelyn Hockstein, United States, for The Washington Post — a man and woman disagree on the removal of the Emancipation Memorial, in Lincoln Park, Washington DC, USA



The Transition: Ignat, Oleg Ponomarev, Russia — Ignat, a transgender man, sits with his girlfriend Maria in Saint Petersburg, Russia



Including others in this email

From: Julian Kass

Sent: Wednesday, 16 August 2019 2:40 PM

To: Robin Fernley

Subject: room booking

Hi Robin

Could I please check that the present room allocated for my subject ACTIVITY D: NOVEL WRITING will be free on Tuesday 3 October at 4 pm?

This is room 238 in the Franklin Building, and of course my session this week was cancelled. The replacement session will be in the study (non-active) week.

If this room's not free, could you please book me another one for that afternoon? The session is for 20 students but it needs to fit 40 to facilitate small group discussions.

thanks

Julian

From: Robin Fernley

Sent: Wednesday, 16 August 2019 3:18 PM

To: Mignon Adamson

Cc: Julian Kass

Subject: FW: room booking

Mignon

Could you please reply to Julian.
Check with Nikki first.

Thanks

Robin

From: Mignon Adamson

Sent: Thursday, 17 August 2019 9:10 AM

To: Nikki Gardener

Cc: Robin Fernley, Julian Kass

Subject: FW: room booking

Hi Nikki

Another one asking to rebook due to Franklin building blackout this week, however Julian has asked for his session to be rescheduled in the study week. See Julian's email below. Also pasting in Bill's emailed advice. Please advise.

Regards

Mignon

Dear all

It's been a challenging week to say the least! Just in case you haven't seen the acting V-C's message, I'll reiterate that the Franklin Building will be closed again this week.

We have been instructed by the DVC not to reschedule any activities affected by the power outage. Participants are being asked to consider alternative options to cover the material that would have been covered. For example, online work during study week.

Cheers

Bill

William Li

Team Leader

Timetable Manager

Student Processing Centre

From: Nikki Gardener

Sent: Thursday, 17 August 2019 10:51 AM

To: Mignon Adamson

Cc: Robin Fernley, Julian Kass

Subject: Re: room booking

Importance: High

Hi Mignon

The deputy VC has agreed that sessions can be re-scheduled for study week, so I am happy to approve this.

Regards

Nikki

From: Mignon Adamson

Sent: Thursday, 17 August 2019 11:06 AM

To: timetabling@uniinc.edu.au

Cc: Dixie Halperin, Sally Nguyen, Julian Kass

Subject: FW: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Importance: High

Hi Cindy

As per the DVC's directive could you please book Room 238 Clarke Building for ACTIVITY D: NOVEL WRITING on Tuesday 3 October 4-6 pm, Study Week? If this room's not free, could you please book another room for that afternoon? The session is for 20 Level A novel students but it needs to accommodate 40 to facilitate small group discussions after the allocated lecture is delivered.

Thanks

Mignon

From: William Li

Sent: Thursday, 17 August 2019 11:32 AM

To: Mignon Adamson

Cc: Dixie Halperin, Sally Nguyen,
timetabling@uniinc.edu.au

Subject: RE: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Do we have the DVC's agreement in writing? I have been provided advice like this earlier this week which turned out not to be correct.

Bill

William Li

Team Leader

TimetableManager

Student Processing Centre

From: Julian Kass

Sent: Thursday, 17 August 2019 12:02 PM

To: Robin Fernley

Subject: room booking request

Hi Robin

Any progress with my room booking request?

I've seen a lot of emails from people (some I don't even know) and it seems to be getting pretty complicated. Lucky that I'm teaching fiction and understand all this!

Only joking of course. I appreciate your efforts here.

best wishes

Julian

From: Robin Fernley

Sent: Thursday, 17 August 2019 2:18 PM

To: Mignon Adamson

Cc: Marshall Banner, Cindy Young,
Nikki Gardener, Julian Kass

Subject: FW: room booking

Mignon or Marsh, could you please advise Julian?

Julian, I am no longer in charge of casual room bookings.

R

From: Marshall Banner

Sent: Thursday, 17 August 2019 3:58 PM

To: Mignon Adamson

Cc: Cindy Young

Subject: RE: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Hi Mignon

We are not authorised to make replacement session bookings for study week unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Could you obtain a rationale from the lecturer to justify why it is not possible to offer this week's content of learning and practice without a replacement session in the study week?

kind regards

Marsh

Marshall Banner

Coordinator

TimetableManager

From: Mignon Adamson
Sent: Friday, 18 August 2019 08:47
To: Nikki Gardener
Cc: Robin Fernley, Julian Kass
Subject: FW: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Hi Nikki

Please see response from TimetableManager below. I have spoken with Bill re his email about rescheduling in the study week, however he has since had communication with Frank Deacon who has stated that lecturers should consider all other options before asking to replace a session in study week.

A rationale has to be obtained to justify why the topic or material cannot be offered in any other way, rather than in a replacement class. Once Bill receives the rationale he will advise whether it can be approved or not.

Please advise what to do?

Thanks
Mignon

From: Julian Kass
Sent: Friday, 18 August 2019 9:27 AM
To: Nikki Gardener
Subject: FW: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Hey Nik

Checking emails on the run (I'm only meant to be working 2.5 days this year and always have the kids Fridays ...)

Just wondering why I need to provide a rationale? We had to cancel sessions (some people two weeks running, luckily not me) because of the outage in Franklin last week ... thats impt missed work, which will put us all behind in our schedules unless it can be made up.

tk's Jules

Sent from my iPad

From: Nikki Gardener
Sent: Monday, 21 August 2019 11:27 PM
To: Julian Kass
Subject: FW: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Hi Jules

Sorry: I was at a conference Friday and have been in meetings all day today.

Please see the string of correspondence below.

I did initially approve your request but am required to show exceptional circumstances before TimetableManager can book a room. Can there be some online activities instead to compensate?

Regards
Nik

From: Julian Kass
Sent: Tuesday, 22 August 2019 9:27 AM
To: Nikki Gardener
Subject: FW: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Hi Nik

I have read the entire string of correspondence and have to say this sounds like a perfect short story! Perhaps one by Kafka.

Or maybe a scene from a Stoppard play (reminds me: saw you across the crowd at the STC the other week: we must catch up again soon).

But seriously, the answer to your question is that there can't be online activities without seriously compromising the overall learning experience. And as you know we non-tenured Level As are under a lot of pressure to apply for promotion. Student satisfaction surveys are an important part of this. As you know.

If this option is taken then I'd expect strong representation from the students to you, and others higher up. We're also committed to formal, face to face discussions: this is in the subject contract, issued before the program started, and if this week is lost forever the students scheduled to present work that week will not be happy.

Let me know what you think: I know that larger groups and blended learning are all inevitable but so far I have no bright ideas about how to put that into practice. Especially when the students have come here for workshop discussions. That is, face to face.

I wonder if it was like this back when writing was first taught. I believe this happened way back in 1916. At Amherst College, Massachusetts, USA, by Robert Frost. A poet, not a writer of absurdist fiction.

best wishes
Jules

Ps: please note my position is Lecturer Level A, not Online Activity Facilitator. Hence the lecturing. In the allocated sessions.

From: Nikki Gardener
Sent: Friday, 25 August 2019 7:44 AM
To: Frank Deacon
Cc: Julian Kass
Subject: Re: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Dear Frank

Please see attached email request regarding a replacement session in Study Week.

Missing a face-to-face session will affect learning for some students and the flow on effect will apparently compromise quality teaching and learning objectives.

Therefore I support Julian's case that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant scheduling a session in study week. I appreciate that similar requests have been rejected, however I am sure he will be grateful for flexibility in this instance.

I also understand Julian is considering making some changes to his subject, for example incorporating work by Kafka, Stoppard and Frost. These changes may only be made following the company's Subject Content Approval Committee, but he should be able to introduce them in time for the final semester next year.

Regards
Nikki

DRAFT: On 25/08/19 10:42 AM,
<Julian.Kass@uniinc.edu.au> wrote:

Fuck you Nik. I never said I was changing my subject to include Kafka etc. But a fucking good idea, thanks for the suggestion.

From: Julian Kass
Sent: Friday, 25 August 2019 10.50 AM
To: Nikki Gardener
Subject: FW: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Hey Nik

Thanks for that. Do I pass this onto Mignon or Marshall now so they can make the room booking? Or to Dixie? Or Cindy?

tk's, Jules

Sent from my iPad

From: Nikki Gardener
Sent: Monday, 28 August 2019 7.14 AM
To: Julian Kass
Cc: William Li, Frank Deacon
Subject: FW: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Dear Julian

No, that would be premature. This request has to be approved by the deputy VC personally. As you would see from last Friday's email I have asked the acting VC Frank Deacon to consider this request, and the correct procedure is that he will pass it on to the DVC.

Furthermore, Bill Li advises us that the students must agree that 'attendance be voluntary and that the participants must not be disadvantaged in any shape or form if they can't attend.' This is in line with Section 8 (a) subclause (iii) of the current workplace agreement, which you signed when you commenced your contract with us.

Given all this, do you still want to go ahead with this request?

Regards
Nikki

DRAFT: On 28/08/19 7:42 AM,
<Julian.Kass@uniinc.edu.au> wrote:

Of course I want to go ahead with this fucking request. It's not like I'm asking for a salary increase, a personal assistant or even an office with a fucking window. I'm just asking for a room and time to teach. So I can fucking teach my students. This is what we DO isn't it? Teach? Like our contracts say? Fuck.

From: Julian Kass
Sent: Monday, 28 August 2019 7.47 AM
To: Nikki Gardener
Cc: William Li, Frank Deacon, Robin Fernley,
Marshall Banner, Mignon Adamson
Subject: FW: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Hi Nikki

In an earlier email I mentioned that this situation sounded like something from Kafka.

I was of course joking.

However, I now wonder if TimetableManager, the Student Admin Centre, the Executive Unit, the Chancellor, indeed the entire university, is under this author's control.

Emeritus Professor Franz Kafka, CEO
of UniversityIncorporated. It's got a
great ring to it, don't you think?

Kind regards
Julian

From: Julian Kass

Sent: Monday, 28 August 2019 4.15 PM
To: Nikki Gardener
Cc: William Li, Frank Deacon, Robin Fernley,
Marshall Banner, Mignon Adamson
Subject: FW: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Hi Nikki

Any news at all regarding the room? Including
others in this email who may be able to advise.

Julian

From: Julian Kass

Sent: Tuesday, 29 August 2019 1.38 PM
To: Nikki Gardener
Cc: William Li, Frank Deacon, Robin Fernley,
Marshall Banner, Mignon Adamson, Cindy
Young, Bill Li, Sally Nguyen, Dixie Halperin
Subject: FW: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Hi everyone

I've been teaching all morning,
so no chance to check emails until now.

Is there any progress on my room booking request?

J

From: Julian Kass

Sent: Tuesday, 29 August 2019 11.22 PM
To: Nikki Gardener
Cc: William Li, Frank Deacon, Robin Fernley,
Marshall Banner, Mignon Adamson, Cindy
Young, Sally Nguyen, Dixie Halperin
Subject: FW: room booking – ACTIVITY D:
NOVEL WRITING

Hi everyone

I'm not sure I have the time or fortitude for this.
I shall advise the class of my on-line availability
during the scheduled time for this session to
provide feedback on their work. Not that the
work will have been produced, given that the
allocated class session never proceeded.

Julian



From: Julian Kass

Sent: Wednesday, 30 August 2019 11.58 PM
To: Franz Kafka
Cc: Nikki Gardener, William Li, Frank
Deacon, Robin Fernley, Marshall
Banner, Mignon Adamson, Cindy
Young, Sally Nguyen, Dixie Halperin
Subject: New appointment

Hi everyone, and welcome to the team Franz.
I think you'll fit right in here.

Julian

**Debra Adelaide's books include the novel
The Women's Pages, the short story collection
Zebra and the memoir *The Innocent Reader:
Reflections on Reading and Writing*.**

WORDS Barnaby Smith



From *The Song of Oblivion*, 1972, by George and Charis Schwarz

Daring and devotion

The art of Sydney couple George and Charis Schwarz defies neat categories, but their body of work will be preserved.

George and Charis Schwarz are outliers in Australian art. In fact, even mentioning them in the context of ‘Australian art’ at all feels awkward. You won’t find the Schwarzes in the annals of the nation’s art history, critical responses to their work are close to non-existent, and no legacy-defining retrospective or survey exhibition has been held. Embraced by neither establishment nor academy, George and Charis are an art movement unto themselves — and they would not have had it any other way.

For those who know their work, the couple’s experimental and adventurous montage-based works are deeply significant. It’s also fair to say they are a unique Sydney cultural phenomenon, representing and defining an aesthetic and artistic philosophy, a long-gone bohemian era, and an impassioned devotion to the once-electric and colourful, now-gentrified, inner-eastern suburbs and its community.

First and foremost, though, they are artists. ‘To me everything else doesn’t matter, all I want to do is make art,’ says George, repeating one of his familiar mantras. ‘I hope that the day I die I’ll be in the middle of a work.’

Their output has been wildly diverse. The Schwarzes’ collaboration, from the late 1960s onwards, yielded avant-garde films, photography, mixed-media works, collages, one-off artist books and, as featured among the State Library of NSW’s new acquisitions, scripts, librettos and unpublished novels. Threaded

through much of their work is a colourful abstract expressiveness, as well as a deep eroticism that manifests as a playful, fantastical presence — and some of it is graphic even by today’s standards.

‘It’s not pervy and it’s not pornography, it’s fun,’ says George as he sits with Charis in the parlour of their terraced Darlinghurst house. Their home since 1974 feels like a cross between a Spanish *trogladita* cave home and a museum, such is the range of curios, found objects and artworks that decorate it. Behind him hangs a striking series of framed photographs, showing close-ups of both male and female genitalia, the former in imposing states of saluting excitement. ‘That’s what we call the family portraits,’ he says.

Ernst George Schwarz was born in 1935 and grew up in Zurich, Switzerland. After art school in Vevey he moved to Basel where he set up an antique shop and embarked on life as an artist. Eventually, he was attracted to

THE BROKEN BRIDE



GEORGE SCHWARZ

AT

HOGARTH GALLERIES

26th APRIL – 14th MAY

TUES – SAT 11a.m. – 6p.m.

Poster for *The Broken Bride* exhibition, 1977

the warm weather and cheap living of southern Spain. There, as a close friend of the couple, artist and curator Craig Judd, puts it, he 'built his own villa in the side of a cliff, hunted with gypsies and grew his own food'.

It was on the beach in the town of Almayate that George met Charis McKittrick in 1964. Four years his junior, Charis, from Melbourne, was holidaying in Spain after travelling to London to study nursing. The chemistry between them was instant, intense and physical; Charis describes their early relationship as 'a compulsion going on that I couldn't control'.

Before long they wanted to travel to Australia — partly so Charis's father, a clergyman, could marry them. This decision precipitated a key chapter in the Schwarz love story: an overland journey on a BMW R50 motorbike, through several exotic, often unmapped, regions: Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, India ...

'We had three dollars a day for food, petrol and overnight stays,' says George. 'We slept outside, ate the cheapest we could, and travelled through countries you couldn't go through today.'

After marrying in Melbourne, further travels took them through Europe and North Africa, across to Canada and down through North and South America to Buenos Aires. Eventually they settled in Sydney, first on Victoria Street in Potts Point and then at the labyrinthine, catawampus Riley Street home in which they still dwell. Over the years there have been myriad films, photographic suites, hybrid art projects, collaborations, exhibitions, controversies and experiments. George and Charis made no fewer than nine self-funded films between 1968 and 1978, including the fabled *Sex Aids and How to Use Them* (the title can be taken as a literal indication of the film's content) of 1975, which at the time became the highest-grossing Australian short film ever made.

To look over the Schwarz artworks and texts is to be dazzled, bewildered and moved. The label 'surrealism' might reasonably come to mind, were it not for the fact George rejects the term in relation to their work. 'I can't back the manifesto of the surrealists,' says George. 'Surrealism came out of revolt against society.' Judd traces the couple's art back to the Art Informel movement popular in postwar Europe and its close relation, Tachisme. Both styles embrace abstraction, non-geometric patterns and shapes and spontaneity.

Other influences include Belgian artists René Magritte and Paul Delvaux; Pieter Bruegel the Elder, whose work George saw in Zurich museums as a child; Salvador Dali; and a shared interest in French symbolist poetry. Australian art never made a great impression on the Schwarzes, though George talks of an admiration of Ian Fairweather and Jeffrey Smart. 'Our lives have been quite separate to the artistic community,' says Charis.

In fact, in the 1970s George wanted to create a brand-new visual mode of expression informed by both their travels and his new life in a strange country. 'George was attracted to photography because it was a new language,' says Judd. 'He loved being an abstract artist, but the experience of riding around the world, and then being in the new world of Australia, required this new language.'

Perhaps George's greatest inspiration of all, though, is Charis. When George speaks of his wife, a certain awe infuses his tone and language. And Judd, who is writing a book about the Schwarzes' art, is keen to emphasise the pivotal role played by Charis in their creative life together.

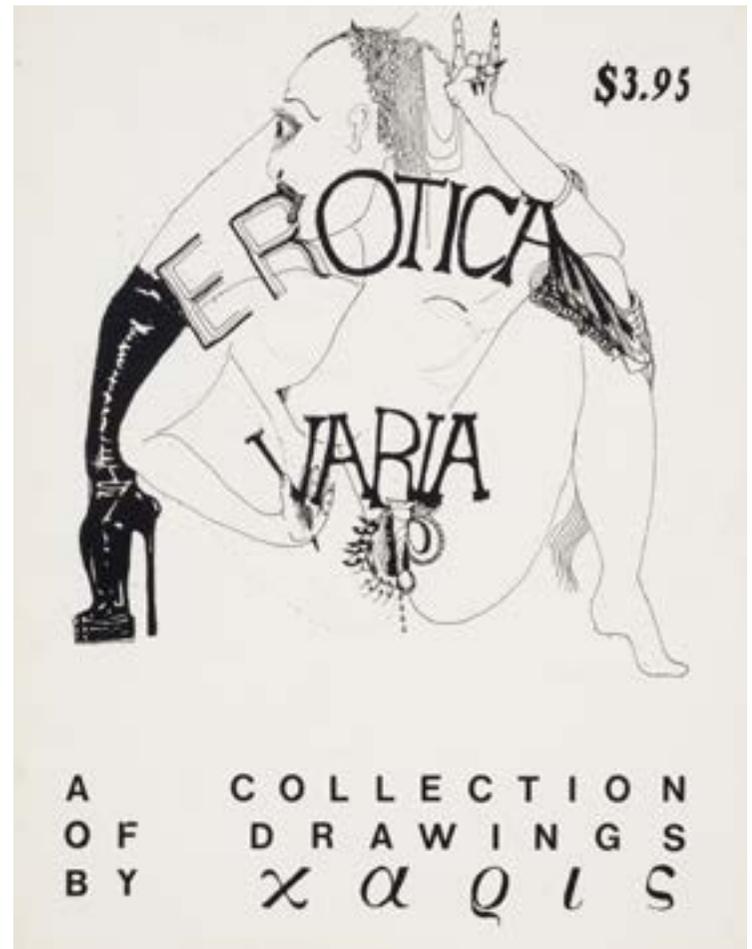
'They are very much equal in their partnership, and real collaborators,' says Judd. 'Charis is central to the development of all of this work. She was a sounding board, she helped organise everything, and when they first came back to Australia she was a translator.'

Judd also observes that George and Charis strived to 'give the incredible lushness of films to the still photograph'. *The Song Oblivion*, 1972, for instance, is a never-exhibited series of staged photographs taken at Cronulla's Wanda Beach, with accompanying text, or 'songs', by Charis. Certainly, there is a filmic quality to this theatrical but melancholy work, suggestive of narrative and an emotional arc.

Another item is *The Broken Bride*, 1977, an ornate bound book housed in an elegant chamois-lined black Perspex case. The book features 35 prints of beautiful, oneiric imagery, interspersed with 16 dyed-up clear cells or 'overlays'. And again, the work is imbued with a cinematic sense of movement and duration, as people, objects, animals and iconography are playfully juxtaposed with each other. In a 1974 ABC television feature on her work, Charis spoke of her practice of 'catching something out of the population and throwing it back, intensifying it'.

A further important aspect of *The Broken Bride's* imagery is buildings and architecture that are immediately recognisable as 'old' Sydney. The prints show several Oxford Street facades that no longer exist. 'George puts a jinx on a building,' says Charis. 'Everything he photographed happened to be demolished.'

And in true Schwarz fashion, the buildings are floating amid clouds, adorned with near-naked women or montaged with all manner of cross-cultural imagery. According to Judd, *The Broken Bride* represents the apogee of their exhibited work, given its technical innovation, its conceptual depth, its flavours of Sydney and the fact it was a collaboration with a silversmith, Roy Lewis, who made the case.



Erotica Varia colouring book, 1973, by Charis Schwarz



Top left and bottom left: From *The Song Oblivion*, 1972, by George and Charis Schwarz
Top right and bottom right: From *The Broken Bride*, 1977, by George Schwarz



George and Charis Schwarz, 2016, photo by Louise Whelan

‘In the middle ages, monks would make decorative books,’ says George when asked about *The Broken Bride*, ‘and I wanted to make one like that.’

As for their more directly erotic works, the Library has also acquired *The Veil*, 1970, an album of photographs that features Charis as a model as well as the author of accompanying texts, and *Erotica Varia*, which Charis dubbed upon publication in 1973 as ‘the world’s first colouring-in book for adults.’

Interestingly, the couple at various points interacted with some illustrious and notorious figures of twentieth-century culture. In the 1970s they struck up a correspondence with Federico Fellini, who had plans to cast them in a film. In Paris, George was on waving terms with Simone de Beauvoir. He also knew the artist couple Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely. He recalls General Franco visiting his village in Spain. In Australia, they were instrumental in the rise to popularity of Madame Lash (Gretel Pillinger) and may have been among the last people to see Juanita Nelson, the heiress and activist who was allegedly murdered in 1975, alive.

And then there are their activities beyond art-making: they are well-known social activists who have fought for various community causes over the decades; and they were nicknamed the ‘farmers of Darlinghurst’ for their beekeeping and award-winning honey and mead. George taught at the

‘Their eye is distinct in its interest in a particular kind of storytelling, of identity, of a life in art.’

Sydney College of Fine Arts for 25 years; Charis spent many years working as a nurse.

But at the core of their lives is art. And, with George and Charis well into their eighties, now is the optimal time to consider their body of work, their importance, and their legacy.

‘The work of George and Charis was uniquely different to the familiar canons of Australian art and photography of the time,’ says Judd. ‘Their eye is distinct in its interest in a particular kind of storytelling, of identity, of a life in art.’

The Australian canon has forever been enriched by the contributions from George and Charis Schwarz, two people who are as profoundly inspiring in person as their art is compelling. And in its melding of cultures, techniques, mediums and philosophies, not to mention the lashings of sensuality, their work is in many ways the most exciting version of what Australian art can be.

Barnaby Smith is an arts writer, poet and musician who lives in the Blue Mountains.

A selection of works by George and Charis Schwarz is on display in the Library’s Amaze Gallery.



Murray, the Escapologist, is hauled up by his feet in a straight-jacket in Shakespeare Place, Sydney, 1928, photo by Sam Hood

Australia's answer to Harry Houdini, magician Murray Carrington Walters (or 'Murray the Escape King' as he preferred to be known) was drumming up publicity for his season at Sydney's Tivoli Theatre.

WORDS John Zubrzycki

Tricks in the mirror

Generations of magicians visited Australia or began their careers here at a time when ‘wonder workers’ were a dominant force in the entertainment industry.

On a sultry late summer day in 1928, visitors to what is now the State Library of NSW were treated to an unusual spectacle: a man in a straight-jacket — his feet tied together with thick rope, his hands handcuffed — was swaying upside down from a crane in the middle of Shakespeare Place.

Australia’s answer to Harry Houdini, magician Murray Carrington Walters (or ‘Murray the Escape King’ as he preferred to be known) was drumming up publicity for his season at Sydney’s Tivoli Theatre. A few days earlier he had been arrested for obstructing traffic as he prepared for an even more dramatic stunt — escaping from a straight-jacket while suspended tens of metres above a 2000-strong crowd in Market Street. Hauled before a magistrate, he declared he would rather spend a month in Long Bay than pay the £5 fine, boasting that he could break out of any prison cell. Tivoli management quickly stepped in to pay the fine, fearful that their star attraction would miss his shows.

Murray was no stranger to brushes with the law. In London, police intervened to stop him being tied to the hook of a crane 60 metres above Piccadilly Circus. Calcutta’s constabulary took a dim view of his intention to jump off the Howrah Bridge ‘straight jacketed and heavily shackled’ because they feared he would drown in the Hooghly River’s treacherous currents. And in Japan authorities ordered his deportation because of the ‘bad example’ his acts would set for would-be jail breakers and thieves.

To disentangle the story of the Melbourne-born escapologist is to shine a spotlight on the history of Australian magic. Murray grew up in an era when Houdini, Howard Thurston, Charles Carter, Dante

(Harry Jansen) and other magicians were among the highest paid and most famous entertainers in the world. Like so many other promising ‘prestidigitators’, Murray was determined not just to emulate his heroes, but to outshine them.

In 1907, Murray’s parents took their six-year-old son to see a performance by Chung Ling Soo, an American trickster whose real name was William Robinson. Soo would later go down in history as the victim of a bullet-catching trick that went tragically wrong. With his flowing silk robes, make-up, waist-length plaited pigtail and East Asian repertoire, he was so convincing that he won the epithet of the ‘Original Chinese Magician’ over Ching Ling Foo, a Chinese man who for a brief period was America’s most successful magician.

Inspired by Robinson’s show, Murray began teaching himself the craft of escapology. When he turned 10, he told his mother to lock him in his room and take the key. ‘In a few minutes he was by my side,’ she told Sydney’s *Sun* newspaper. ‘He said mysteriously, “Don’t ask me how I escaped. That’s my secret. Someday, I will make a lot of money through my knowledge.”’ Recognising his exceptional talents, the Australian Society of Magicians made him the club’s youngest member. Aged 16, he boarded SS *Niagara* bound for the American west coast, hoping to turn his hobby into a career.

In doing so he joined scores of Australians representing every imaginable genre of entertainment from balladeers to balloonists, Shakespearean actors to sopranos, and circus acrobats to stand-up comedians, playing to audiences in the jungles of Borneo, the Himalayan hill stations of India and the treaty ports of China and Japan. Running this low-tech but highly sophisticated and globalised entertainment industry were business-savvy entrepreneurs like Robert ‘Sparrow’ Smythe, Harry Lyons and JC Williamson.

Murray’s State Library stunt came nine decades after the first-known performance of theatrical magic in Australia. In 1836, Monsieur du Pree, ‘The Wizard of the South’, delighted audiences in Parramatta with



Poster for The Great Levante, c 1950s

‘some surprising illusions ... such as catching a bullet between his teeth, discharged from a pistol, which may be loaded by anyone, dancing a figure blindfolded among nine eggs placed at certain distances; Ventriloquism &c. &c. &c.’ Under his real name, Thomas Amott, Du Pree had arrived in Australia in 1827 as a convict after being found guilty in the Old Bailey of stealing two pianos and a harp.

The gold rushes of the 1850s were a boom time for entertainers in New South Wales and Victoria. As conjurers arrived from overseas, accompanying circus shows or on their own, cashed-up miners clambered for seats in pop-up theatres from Ballarat to Braidwood. Among the performers was the first magician to tour globally, Scotsman John Henry Anderson, who called himself ‘The Wizard of the North’.

For Anderson and other stage illusionists, strong competition eventually came from the spiritualist acts of the Davenport brothers, Ira and William. Born in Buffalo, New York State, they rode the wave of interest in spiritualism that began in 1848 with the spirit rapping and table turning of America’s Fox sisters. The Davenports arrived in Melbourne in 1876 with a program centred on producing ‘manifestations’ with musical instruments and other objects while they appeared to be securely tied with ropes in a ‘spirit cabinet’. To rule out any form of deception, audience members were invited to tie up the brothers, who would then miraculously escape from their bindings.

Newspaper reports at the time reveal a healthy dose of scepticism among theatregoers. In Ballarat, an audience member bent on debunking their act spent 20 minutes tying the brothers with his own knots and sealing the cabinet. It took less than five minutes for the doors to reopen and for the two men to step out, ‘leaving the ropes coiled behind them, the house fairly convulsed, and the Davenports received quite an ovation’. Exposing spiritualism became a duty for magicians such as Anderson, who used his shows to duplicate the Davenports’ effects and to prove that modern magic was based firmly on science and rationality. William Davenport died in Sydney in 1877 of tuberculosis and is buried in Rookwood cemetery.

The flow of magicians arriving in Australia also included troupes from Asia. In 1880, Harry Lyons brought the ‘Afghan Museum and Oriental Curiosity Bazaar’ to Victoria. Billed as ‘Cabul jugglers and East Indian Magicians’, the ensemble included Koodah Cassim Bukos, a fire eater, and Buchas Mahomet Khan, a ventriloquist. A decade



Harry Job of Andrade's Magic Depot demonstrating card tricks, 1950, photo by Ivan Ive, *People* magazine

later, Charles Bastard — described by Calcutta's Deputy Commissioner of Police as 'a collector of curiosities and manager of a skating rink' — unveiled the 'Museum of Indian Curiosities'. Performers included Paine Pindarrum, 'a juggler of high order', who demonstrated the 'cups and balls' trick, produced fire from his mouth and spat out dozens of two-inch-long nails. Another headliner was Galip Sahib, who executed the 'basket trick' with a young girl named Giddy. Crammed inside a wicker hamper, Giddy screamed as the magician thrust his sword into the container, only for her to emerge unscathed. A few months later, the entire troupe mutinied over pay and conditions and marched on the District Court in Melbourne, bringing traffic to a standstill. They were eventually repatriated to India.

The so-called Golden Age of Magic from about 1880 to 1920 saw most of the world's greatest magicians tour Australia. Among the arrivals were Thurston, Houdini and Carter, who appropriated a range of Eastern styles. 'Carter the Great', as he billed himself, switched between Indian and Chinese characters as he presented acts that included *The Séance from Simla*, *A Night in China* and a levitation routine allegedly taught to him by a 'high caste Indian fakir'. Brightly coloured posters showing him dressed as a Chinese mandarin, an Indian prince, a Mongol warrior, and even a pith-helmeted British soldier astride a camel, were plastered across towns, ensuring packed houses wherever he performed. Originals of the posters now trade hands for thousands of dollars.

Among those flocking to the shows of Thurston and others was the young Leslie Cole. Born in the Sydney suburb of Alexandria in 1892, he became a professional magician in 1910, initially performing escape acts before branching out to bigger, more diverse spectacles. By the 1930s, his signature 'How's Tricks?' show featured more than three dozen performers presenting a range of variety acts.

In 1927, adopting the stage name Levante — together with his wife Gladys and their six-year-old daughter Esme, who was billed as 'the Daughter of the Gods, the Child Phenomena, Mentalist and Crystal Gazer' — he began a tour of Asia and Europe that would last for almost 13 years. In Nanking, he came across a street act where an elderly man thrust a knife into a young boy's stomach and then slashed his neck, causing blood to spurt in all directions. Horror-struck, he watched as another performer covered the boy's inert body with a cloth. When a policeman appeared and threatened to take the magician to prison, the man pleaded that he could restore the boy to life again if sufficient money was collected from the crowd. Satisfied with the takings, he pulled the cloth away. Aside from 'a few smears of what might be blood, the boy appeared to be quite normal,' Levante wrote in the mimeographed newsletter *Mysteries of the Mystic Seven*, adding that 'I had no solution to offer for [how the trick was done].' It was only when witnessing a similar performance in Ceylon that he discovered the secret.

In 1939 'The Great Levante' was named as the world's number one magician by the International

Brotherhood of Magicians. Forced by the war to return to Australia, he presented his 'How's Tricks?' show to capacity crowds. '[N]obody else was working an illusion show of that scale, and he kept up his reputation as "The Great" even though the post-war years became more and more difficult to run a big show,' says magic historian and Levante's biographer Kent Blackmore. 'Only Maurice Rooklyn approached the size of his show "How's Tricks?" Overall, everything about Levante hangs off his personality. Onstage he was friendly but the master of his art, and a very impressive, dignified character. Offstage he was everyone's friend, sociable and easy to approach.'

Esme Levante, who became was one of the principal performers in her father's shows, began touring internationally in the 1950s with her own magic cabaret act, making her one of the few professional female magicians. 'It was, and is, a male dominated field, though there were female magicians in Australia dating back to the mid-1800s,' says Blackmore. 'There was definitely a "boy's club" attitude,' he adds, citing the refusal to admit female members to the prestigious London club, the Magic Circle, as the most obvious example.

In 1920 Levante founded the Melbourne branch of the Australian Society of Magicians. The society's journal, the *Magic Mirror*, was integral to the trade in secrets and encouraged innovation and experimentation. This was supported by stores such as Andrade's Magic Department, which had branches in Melbourne and Sydney selling books, magazines and magic paraphernalia.

'If you look back at the 1920s, magic clubs were social groups and communities. They ran regular shows for the public, and social activities such as picnics,' explains Blackmore. 'Magic shops, such as Sydney's "Weirdo's" or "DeLarno's" were places for beginners to meet new people, trade ideas, get personalised advice on what sort of tricks were suitable.'

Although the widescale uptake of television in the 1960s took a toll on live magic, Levante continued to perform until shortly before his death in 1978. During his career he amassed the vast collection of books, pamphlets, journals and posters that was acquired in the early 1960s by one of his students, Robert Robbins, who performed under the stage name of Robert Merlini. In 1967, the collection was purchased by the State Library of NSW.

Sydney-based magician Adam Mada describes the Robbins Stage Magic Collection as 'a real and tactile connection to the past, to a time when magic, magicians and wonder workers were a dominant form of entertainment'. He adds: 'I find it fascinating, reading about tricks and illusions and basic principles well over 150 years old which are not only relevant in my work today, but will still readily fool a modern audience.'

Having worked as a magician for almost 20 years, Mada has seen his profession undergo enormous changes. 'Magicians will now create specific content that will only ever be consumed in quick bite clips through social media and would never work in real life. This was always a major bone of contention in the past between magicians who worked live and those who began to explore television. It's the same bone with the rise of the social media magician.'

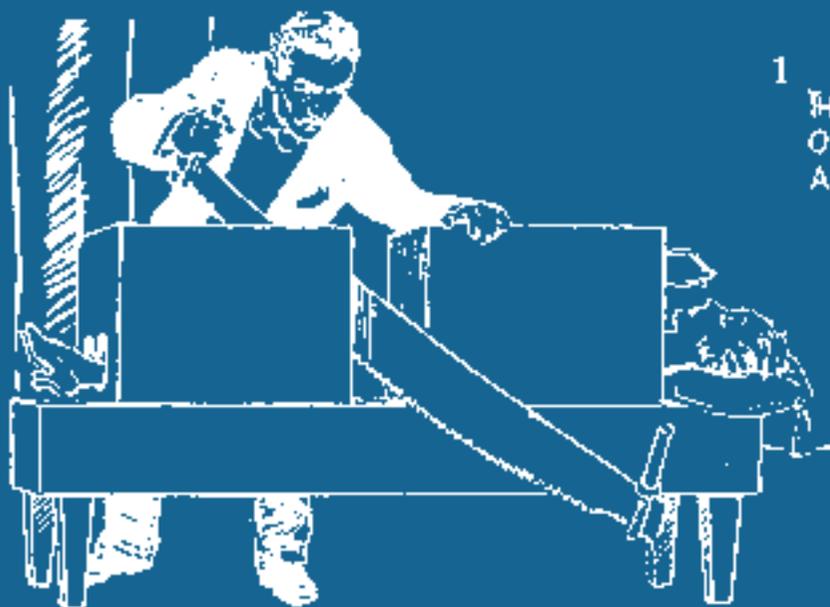
Embracing changes in technology has always been the lifeblood of the magician's craft. The smoke and mirrors used to project ghosts onto the stage in the early 1800s had by the end of the century progressed into elaborate pulleys and invisible wires that would send a magician's assistant soaring above the audience. 'We magicians have an uncanny knack to adapt, embrace and flourish with social and technological developments,' says Mada.

That ability to adapt was recently put to its most severe test since the Depression of the 1930s wiped out most of the vaudeville industry. Mada believes the Covid-19 lockdowns that closed live performance venues across Australia in 2020 will go down in history for heralding the rise of 'digital magicians' using live stream performances to engage with their audience. 'The take up has been phenomenal, with audiences being able to interact in real time through their screens from home with magic created specifically for this new medium,' he says. 'Magic has never been more alive and accessible, and this is pushing incredible innovation.'

John Zubrzycki is the author of *Empire of Enchantment: The Story of Indian Magic* (Scribe). He is the 2021 Merewether Fellow, researching Australian popular culture in Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

***How's Tricks? Magic in the Golden Age* is a free exhibition in the Library's galleries from 26 June 2021.**

SAWING A WOMAN IN HALF

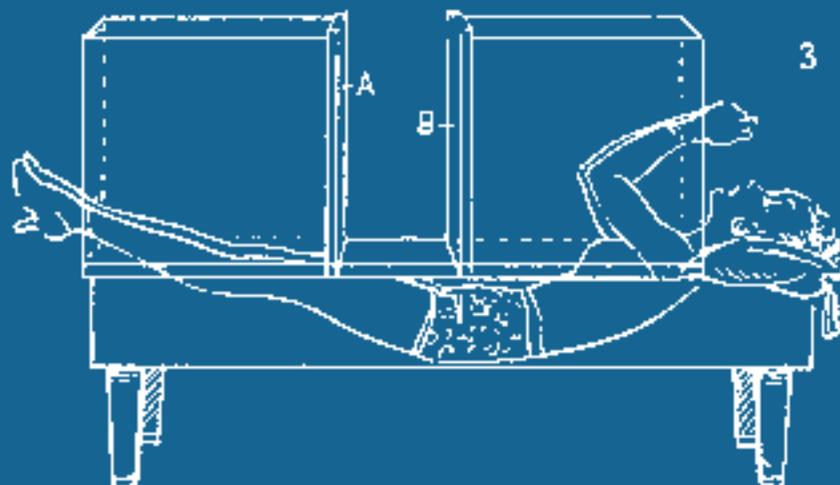
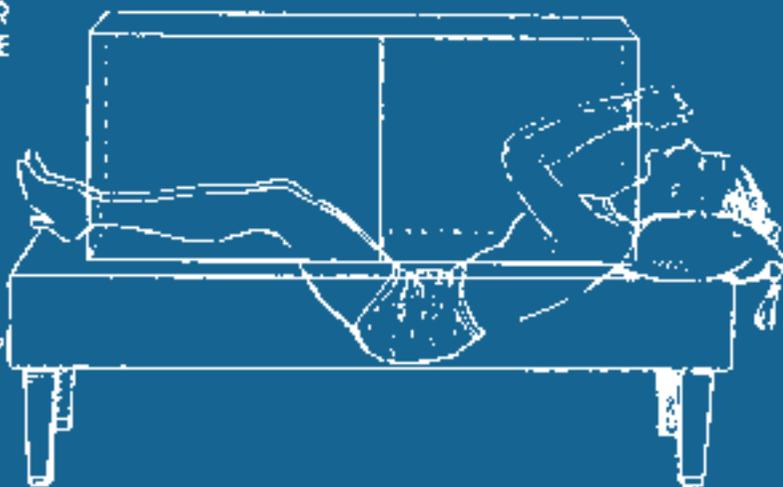


1 THIS MOST FAMOUS OF STAGE TRICKS ORIGINATED IN ENGLAND. IN NO TIME AT ALL THERE WERE FIFTEEN COPIES OF THE ACT, PLAYING ALL OVER THE WORLD, EACH CLAIMING TO BE THE ORIGINAL.

IT IS ONE OF THE FEW TRICKS SPECTACULAR ENOUGH TO HAVE CONSTITUTED AN ENTIRE STAGE ACT IN ITSELF.

2

THE GIRL ENTERS THE BOX THE ENDS OF WHICH ALLOW HER HEAD, HANDS AND FEET TO PROTRUDE. AS THE BOX IS BEING LOCKED, SHE SINKS DOWN INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE PLATFORM WHICH SUPPORTS THE BOX.



3

WHEN THE BOX HAS BEEN SAWED THROUGH, TWO SLABS (A AND B) ARE INSERTED. THEN THE SECTIONS OF THE SEPARATE BOX MAY BE PULLED APART TO SHOW THAT THE LADY IS REALLY IN TWAIN.



Jamie Marina Lau,
photo by Diego Campomar,
shot at The Photo Studio
Australia

Novel thinking

Jamie Marina Lau began her second novel in a dream-like state that belies her intense research.

Jamie Marina Lau is talking to me from her apartment in Melbourne, explaining how she got out of Hong Kong during the protests in mid-2019. ‘I remember on the way to the airport seeing people lining up — lines of protestors.’ The day she left, someone had died either jumping or falling from a ridge.

When she arrived back in Australia, Lau went straight into self-imposed isolation for almost three weeks at an artist’s studio residency in Carlton, Melbourne. When she came out at the end of that time, she had a draft of her second novel, *Gunk Baby*, which has just been published by Hachette.

Lau’s first novel, *Pink Mountain on Locust Island*, was a knockout debut. Fizzing and popping with the texture of Chinatown, its neon signs and internet jargon sat above a sinister and uncomfortable subplot involving drugs and fraud. It was shortlisted for four major prizes in 2019, including the Stella Prize.

I remember interviewing Lau about that first book and being bowled over by hearing she’d written the first draft for it in a short, crazy burst of a couple of months, when she was just 19. *Gunk Baby* appears to have been born of a similar state.

‘It was the same sensation of it being really focused and me being in a flow state,’ Lau explains, ‘And the residency was like being in a hole. It was very lonely. And there was no light coming through, except for some skylights, because it was in a block of studios. And so it was very secluded. And I’ve never been that isolated before. And every day I sat in that studio all day and all night and just wrote the book.’

She had gone in with some pieces of a previous work and a few mental images — the character of Leen, whom we meet in

Gunk Baby, and her car on a highway — and after the residency it was a ‘really rough first draft, the skeleton of the story’.

Only in hindsight does Lau see the connection between her time in Hong Kong and the themes that emerge in the novel. Leen, the protagonist, has spent a childhood moving between cities. She decides to open a healing studio in the (fictional) Par Mars Topic Heights shopping complex where she will offer ear-cleaning, an ancient Chinese practice that she learned from her mother.

The book has multiple layers of criticism and critique. The most obvious targets are the consumerism and waste — Leen makes some new friends who are in a quasi-socialist online forum of people who want to ‘disrupt’ capitalism. More insidious and dangerous is the emergence of security and policing strategies in the mall, and the troubling larger questions around who or what police are ‘protecting’ in any setting.

Growing up in suburban Australia, Lau says, she always felt safer in shopping centres than in the streets. There was something reassuring about being under surveillance. But when she thought about it later, she realised that the security was there to protect the merchandise, and the promise of the place, not the human beings inside it.

In Hong Kong, Lau had visited an old British colonial police station that had been transformed into an art museum. She had travelled to Hong Kong almost every year over the past decade, and had seen the city grow and change, but at the museum she learned more about its contested history and discriminatory policing. She was reminded that her

brother, who has a shaved head and ‘looks Westernised’, was frequently targeted by the police when they visited.

Compounding these reflections was the Black Lives Matter movement, which hit mainstream Australia just as Lau was editing the novel. ‘I remember having a lot of resources to read, obviously, about abolition,’ she says of mid-2020, ‘and it felt like everything sort of came together, about what I was trying to say on a deeper level about the society we live in.’ A crucial source of ideas for Lau was *Carceral Capitalism* by Jackie Wang. *Gunk Baby* takes an idea like Neighbourhood Watch and asks whether its purpose is to encourage community-minded helpers or give everyone the opportunity to act like a cop.

Lau’s creativity extends from prose to music, but she says the two practices tend to ‘butt heads’. ‘They really don’t like each other. I think it’s the constant, sort of, crisis I have. I feel like if I wasn’t a novel writer, I could write more music.’

When I push her to articulate this tension, and why it seems like the writing is currently winning the competition, something very interesting emerges: ‘Novel writing makes me feel like anything else I create will never be honest.’ She struggles to write lyrics for songs, and prefers producing music.

‘I don’t know if I feel good by the end of a three-minute song, that I’ve encapsulated everything I want to say,’ she tells me. ‘Whereas with novel writing, I get to deal with all the negative sides as well as the positive. It allows you to see the mind as something which is changing constantly. And it allows you to see certain habits and biases of a character’s mind or your own mind. And it allows you to investigate the idea that opinion is really conditioned, and the world around you conditions the way that you think and the way that you react.’

Despite this conflict, Lau isn’t prepared to stop making music altogether. ‘I still try to do music because I’ve always loved to do music. I get FOMO if I don’t do it. Right now I am sort of dipping my toe into doing film sound-tracking, which is a really great intersection, because it allows you to explore the narrative turns and subvert the narrative turns and I really like how they intersect in that.’ Both her books so far use a first-person, stream-of-consciousness style that rockets along from plot point to plot point, engulfing the reader in a sensory overload. Lau says she likes this form ‘because I feel like it helps me understand how I think.’

With *Gunk Baby*, Lau says she initially thought she was writing about Melbourne, having been ‘surrounded by suburbia’ for her whole life. But readers said it

reminded them of LA, which she also visited for some time. ‘When I was in LA, I realised that a lot of the spaces we were driving through reminded me of where I lived in Melbourne, and I thought about how suburbia on the opposite side of the world can still feel the same.’

She reflects on when she feels that she belongs and when she feels alien in these spaces, and broadens that gaze to society and consumers, and the connection between spending and belonging.

Using her writing to further her own thinking is something she has experienced more intensely since having been in lockdown in Melbourne during 2020. ‘I feel like my priorities are really different now,’ she explains. ‘I feel like I still trust the idea that storytelling is a really key element in demanding change and participating in change. But I feel like I don’t want to force that unless it’s necessary.’

Overwhelmed by the enormity of the issues our society is facing, Lau thinks more about whether she wants to add her voice and opinions to the mix. ‘I feel like you would never guess that I do a lot of research behind my books,’ she says, ‘because I write everything in a really dreamy, nostalgic way. But it’s more to figure out how I think, and I really enjoy the research part of it. I almost feel like there’s an information overload right now. Like I have so much that I actually just want to work through by myself without reflecting that into another parallel universe.’

In other words, there is still work for books to do, but as a writer she is growing more cautious about when to listen and when to speak. What helps and what harms? When I tell her I’m always wary of ‘contributing to the noise, rather than actually making a contribution,’ she replies, ‘Yes! That’s exactly it. That’s what I feel ... But it’s also necessary. Some people really respond to being told what others think, and then analysing that. But others need to get the ideas subtly fed into their lives, through movies or even documentaries, like, with story and narrative. And so I feel like both are important.’

For her, a critical part of the writing process is conversation and communication with others. ‘Talking to people is the best part of my job as a writer,’ she says. But she finds talking about her own work challenging. ‘It’s so monetised and it’s so glamorised, the idea of doing anything these days successfully, or having a book published or having the platform to make a film, or having a platform to have your music heard ... it almost feels really repulsive, because that genuine longing to talk to people and communicate in the form of fiction is kind of lost in all that

noise and publicity.’ She doesn’t like how much the creative world has taken on the markers of the celebrity world — the idolising and the pedestals.

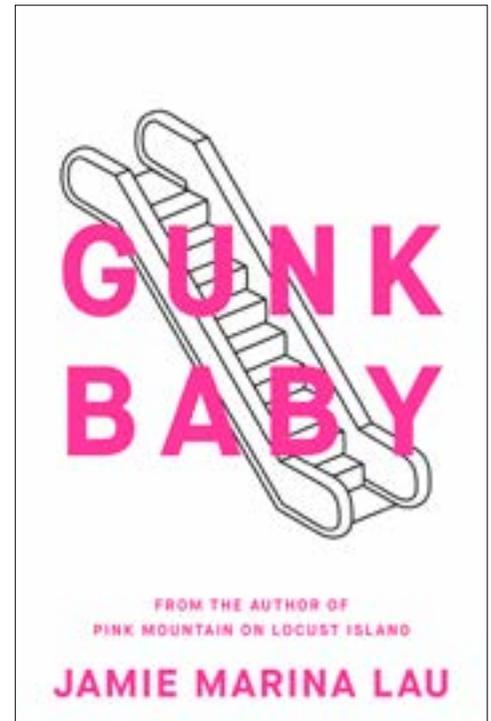
More than this, Lau appears uneasy taking ownership of her own creations, saying it’s ‘really difficult’ to identify herself with the name on the covers of her works. We finally get to a point where I think I understand her approach to writing and creativity: she feels more like a vessel than an author-god; ideas and conversations flow through her and she reshapes them into a particular form. ‘Vessel is the perfect word!’ she says. ‘I used to genuinely believe that, because I grew up in like a very spiritual home. So when I wrote, I felt like it was a break for me. Like, I could be somewhere else.’

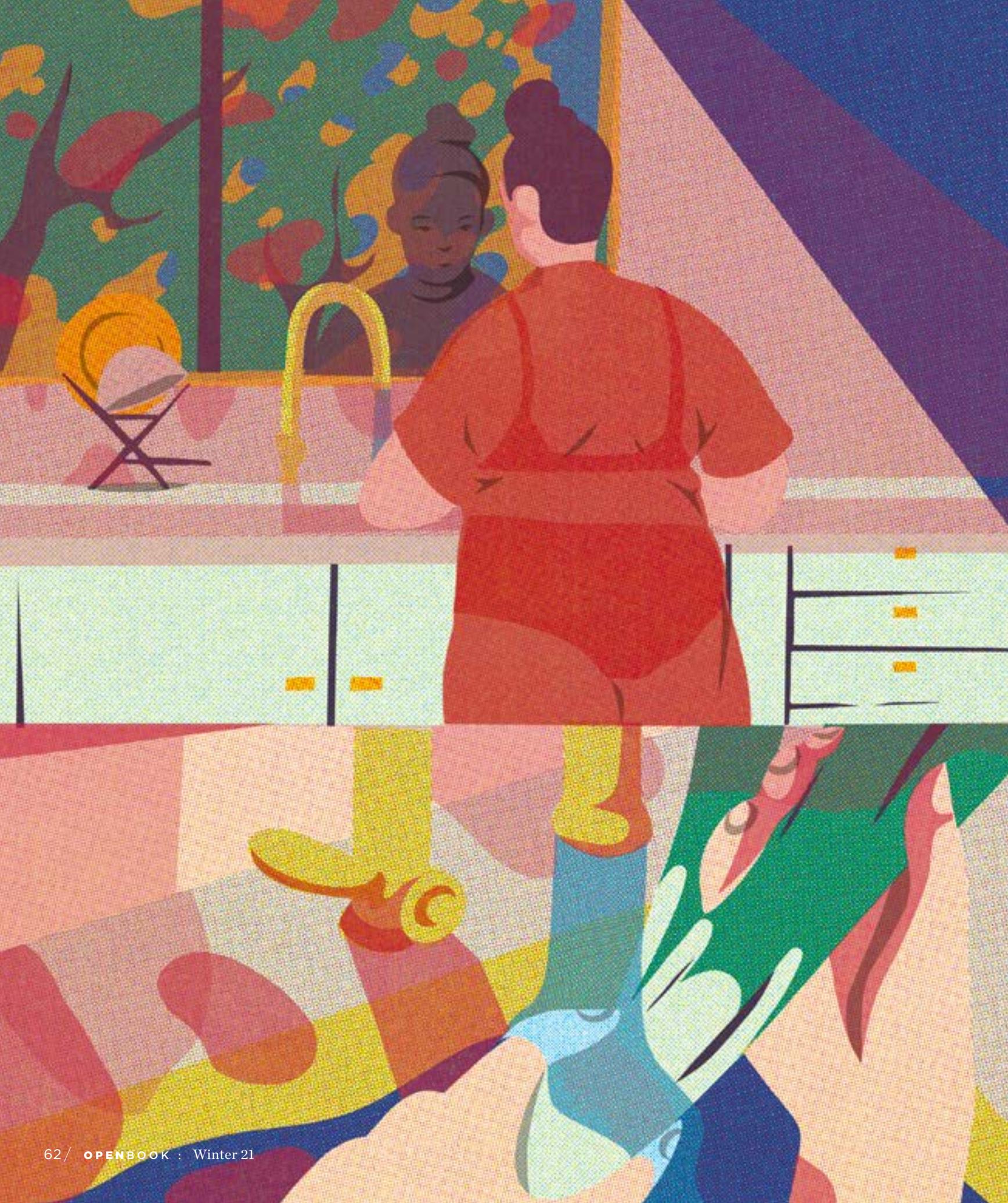
Gunk Baby is no exception. When we speak Lau has some events coming up at Sydney Writers’ Festival, including a workshop she’ll be running, and she says she’s ‘really nervous’ about it.

I’m reminded of how our society asks — and indeed expects — our writers to also be speakers and performers. Yet when we hear stories like Lau’s — of an author locking herself away in isolation to make incredible work — we love it. The publicity machine seems to want all fiction to explore critical contemporary social issues. It wants exciting new voices to sell their identities. It wants younger and younger geniuses.

Lau manages to offer all these things, but it’s on her own terms. The book itself resists easy categorisation. It has sex and drugs and humour, while it plays with language and abstract ideas. It offers both a surreal and hyper-real reading experience. I’m thrilled *Gunk Baby* is being published by Orion Books overseas. I don’t know what ‘Australian literature’ is supposed to be right now, but if more people out there are reading Lau, it will reflect mightily highly on the rest of us.

Bri Lee is the author of the award-winning *Eggshell Skull*, the essay *Beauty*, and the newly published *Who Gets to Be Smart*. She hosts the monthly B List book club at the State Library of NSW.





Light less guarded

To touch the crisp bright space drawn out of the toccata
where thought resonates with the chiming of clear bells

that sharpen openness, certainty elusive but willing
in the quiet drip and slide of brackish water beneath

reedy grass and scrub, unstoppable in our time horizon.
The start of winter's turning in the golden scent of those

flowers; *toccare*, to touch the revolving figures: chilled
fingers, light less guarded, walls that contemplate relinquishing

coldness. Hand-snipped bunches held tight with rubber bands,
the cut blossoms restive in vases, in the grip. High windows

that fill with rounded clouds of beaten egg white, a half-turn
into longer days under the fingers' deftness at the keyboard.

Jane Gibian

Jane Gibian is a poet, and librarian at the State Library, whose new collection of poetry, *Beneath the Tree Line*, will be published by Giramondo in 2021. Her work has been anthologised most recently in *Contemporary Australian Poetry* (Puncher and Wattman) and *Contemporary Australian Feminist Poetry* (Hunter).

Illustration by Lotte Smith, a printmaker, illustrator and mural artist who creates surreal representations of lived experiences.

WORDS Rachel Franks

Mutiny & murder

The horrific tale of the *Batavia* shipwreck became one of the first true crime bestsellers.

The seventeenth-century flagship of the Dutch East India Company, the *Batavia*, was a glorious vessel, a symbol of wealth and power. It was not, however, invincible. Two letters recently added to the Library's collection detail how the ship succumbed to the sea on its maiden voyage and the horror that followed.

The *Batavia* set sail from the Dutch port of Texel on 27 October 1628 in a fleet headed for the city that shared its name (now the Indonesian capital, Jakarta) in the Dutch East Indies.

On board were more than 300 sailors, soldiers and civilians, as well as silver coins and other supplies for the colonial city. Bad weather saw the *Batavia* separated from the other ships, forcing the crew to face the Indian Ocean alone. A solo crossing was risky, but not everyone was unhappy with the turn of events.

The commander of the fleet, Francisco Pelsaert, was on board the *Batavia* alongside the ship's captain, Ariaen Jacobsz. The two men disliked each other and the friction between them intensified when Jeronimus Cornelisz, Pelsaert's deputy, offered his loyalty to Jacobsz and joined him in plotting mutiny.

Then, on 4 June 1629, the *Batavia* was sliced open on the Morning Reef, just off the coast of Western Australia. If Pelsaert had simply been deposed, the incident would have generated only a short paragraph in maritime history. Instead, Jacobsz and Cornelisz ensured that one of the first ships to be wrecked in Australian waters came to be remembered not just as a terrible accident but also as one of the bloodiest and most sadistic mutinies on record.

About 40 passengers drowned as the *Batavia* sank, the survivors making their way to the nearby Houtman Abrolhos

Islands. With more survivors than supplies to keep them alive, Pelsaert made the desperate decision to take the ship's longboat and finish the journey to the Dutch East Indies. A crew of 48 men, including Jacobsz, took 33 days to sail almost 3000 kilometres. Once in Batavia, Jacobsz was arrested for negligence. It then took a week to prepare another ship, the *Sardam*, so that Pelsaert could embark on a rescue mission.

Cornelisz, meanwhile, had taken command of those left

behind. A disgraced pharmacist-turned-merchant, he disposed of anyone he saw as a threat to his control, or who would consume limited resources he needed for himself and his supporters. There was no mercy for anyone — military or civilian; man, woman or child — who might question him. More than 100 people were drowned or butchered on his orders. Some of the women were spared, only to be raped repeatedly by the leader and his men.

Several terrifying skirmishes broke out between the men fighting for Cornelisz and a group led by Wiebbe Hayes, who stood up to the mutineers. Cornelisz was eventually captured, but the risk of being overrun by his followers remained. Then, on 17 September, 63 days after the *Sardam* had headed south,

Pelsaert returned to what is now known as Batavia's Graveyard.

The reprisals for the crimes committed were swift and absolute. The worst of the mutineers had their right hands chopped off and were hanged on 2 October 1629. Cornelisz's hanging was especially bloody: both of his hands were amputated before he was strung up. Two of his men, Wouter Loos and Jan Pelgrom de Bye, were abandoned on the Australian mainland, becoming the first Europeans to live



Leyds veer-schuyts praetjen, 1630



Illustration from *Ongeluckige voyagie*, 1645, by Francisco Pelsaert

on the continent. The rest of the mutinous gang was transported on the *Sardam* to Batavia for trial and punishment. When Pelsaert finally made it back there on 5 December 1629, he had with him only a third of those who had left the Netherlands the year before.

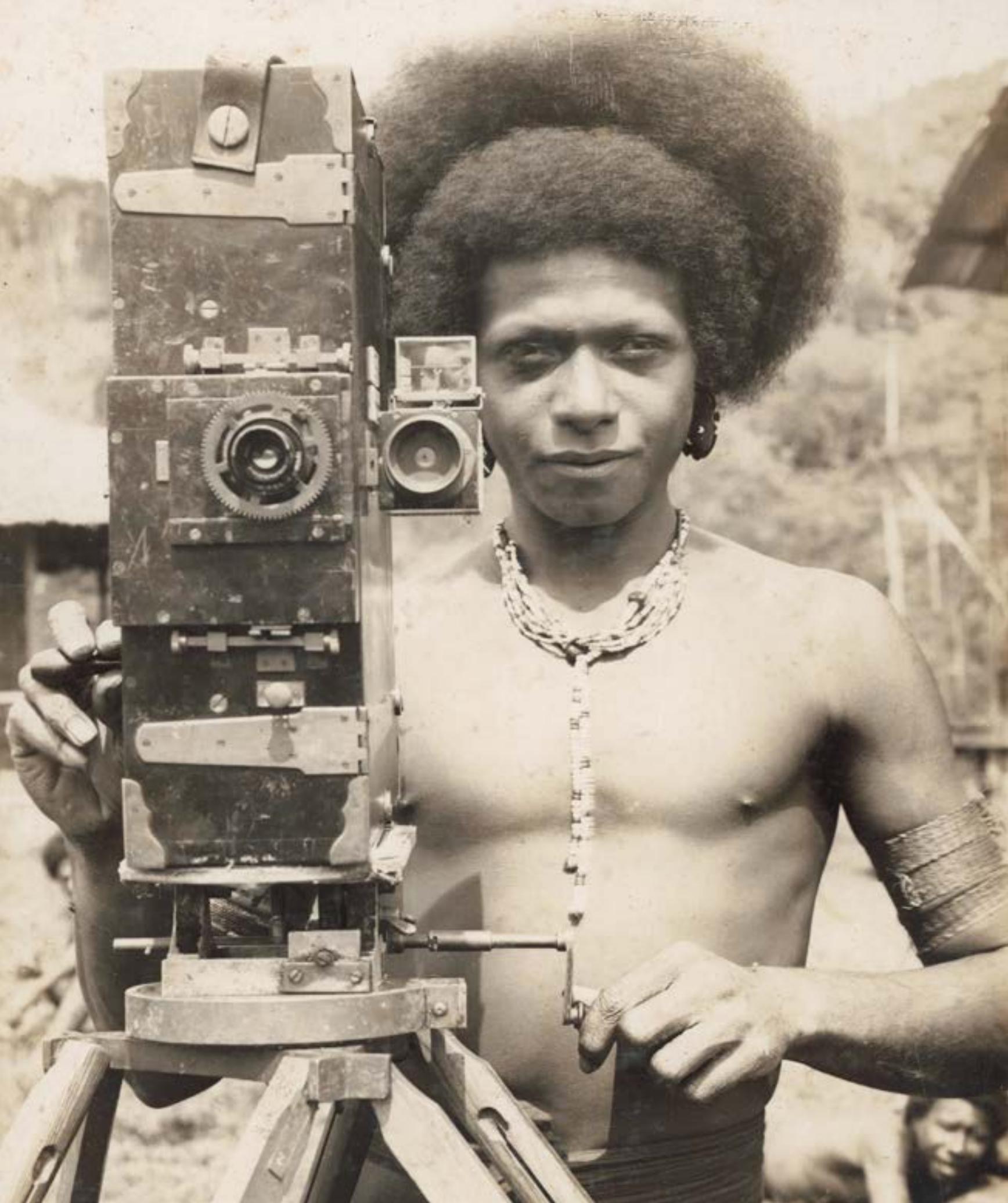
Two letters written in 1629 — and bound within a small book recently acquired by the Library — offer more details of the violence that unfolded on a set of inhospitable islands north-west of Geraldton. The book, a second edition from 1630 of a text that first appeared in 1628, is titled *Leyds veer-schuyts praetjen* or ‘Leyden Ferry-boat Gossip between a Merchant and a Citizen of Leyden’. It focuses on the talented painter Johannes van der Beeck, who rejected the social standards of his day and was accused of blasphemy, heresy and Satanism. It is widely believed van der Beeck influenced Cornelisz.

Batavia expert Mike Dash believes the authors of these accounts are Cornelisz Jansz, who fought alongside Hayes from West Wallabi Island to resist the mutineers, and Claes Gerritz, who sailed in the longboat as a member

of Pelsaert’s crew. These documents are ‘made public as a warning to everyone’.

The two first-hand accounts pre-date Pelsaert’s own report, *Ongeluckige voyagie* or ‘Unhappy Voyage’, which was not published until 1647, more than 15 years after his death. A gory tale of victims and villains, it includes summaries of the confessions extracted from the mutineers under torture. The book became one of the world’s first true crime bestsellers, going into nine editions, and is the standard source for the storytellers who have retold this shocking tale for almost four centuries.

Dr Rachel Franks is the Library’s Coordinator, Scholarship. Her biography of Robert ‘Nosey Bob’ Howard will be published by NewSouth in 2022.



Reimagining the Pacific

While the Pacific has loomed large in Australia's history, there is a riddle at the heart of our relationship with the region.

Since Australia's colonisation, the islands above us and to our north-east have been places of wealth, subjects of study, playgrounds and battlefields. Many Australians have personal and familial links to the region. Governments, churches, private organisations and individuals have given vast amounts of monetary and in-kind assistance to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and elsewhere. Footballers with Pacific heritage have become sporting heroes. And yet pundits constantly lament that Australians know little about the Pacific, and only the occasional natural disaster or political upheaval interrupts our normal news coverage.

Part of the answer to that conundrum lies in how we came to see ourselves over the past two centuries. For decades before and after Federation, white Australians looked to Britain as the motherland. Later, in the twentieth century, another 'white' country, the United States, was embraced as a big

cousin. Pacific Islanders and Asians were the foils against which many Australians identified themselves.

This national image was honed by stories from the interior. The forests, rivers, pastures and deserts of Australia's great expanses were the crucibles of a national type — shearers, farmers and drovers (and occasionally their wives). CEW Bean's strapping Anzacs were the products of that wide brown land, and today they have been joined in the ranks of quintessential Australianness by hardworking suburban 'mums and dads'.

Modern Australia clearly sat within but apart from its region, but exactly how did its white citizens distinguish themselves from those around them? During my 2019 CH Currey Fellowship at the State Library, I looked at the period between 1870 to 1970, a century in which Australians asserted their presence commercially, militarily and culturally in their region. Those years followed on directly from the period examined by Bernard Smith in his two magisterial studies of the Pacific's impact on European art and science, *European Vision and the South Pacific* and *Imagining the Pacific*. It was from the latter that I took the Fellowship title, 'Reimagining the Pacific'.

I expected to find many expressions of difference, and I did. White Australians often regarded themselves as the heirs

of British supremacy, and assumptions about superiority in morality, technology and intelligence underpinned much that was said and done. They also believed they had a right to enter, explore and annexe the territory of others, and so Queensland annexed the islands of the Torres Strait in the 1870s — acting more as a nation than a colony — without regard for the inhabitants and in the belief that if Australians did not control those lands, other Europeans would.

Similarly, the first matter of business for the new Australasian Geographical Society (later prefixed by Royal) in 1883 was organising an expedition to New Guinea to collect evidence to support its annexation by Britain in the face of German interests. The Society's correspondence, held by the Library, includes letters from those eager to participate in the expedition. One particularly illuminating handwritten note came from Richard Searle, formerly of the Natal Mounted Police, who was keen to punish 'natives' for recent violent encounters with the advance guard of colonisation. 'My age is 24 ...' he wrote. 'I can ride well, dismount quickly and fire a good shot at moving objects'. Those 'objects' presumably included fleeing locals.

In the event, Searle was not selected for the Society's 1885 expedition. Although the venture was not

particularly successful — and was, for a time, feared lost on the Fly River — it didn't dampen interest in the territory. In 1887 Britain somewhat reluctantly annexed the south-eastern part of the main island, which was named Papua, leaving the north-east to the Germans — much to the annoyance of Australian colonists.

Assisted by the maritime services of the Australasian United Steam Navigation Co, Burns Philp and others, white Australians pursued commercial, intellectual and recreational interests in the region. *The Handbook of Information*, produced in Brisbane in 1894–95 by the British India and Queensland Agency Co Ltd, advised prospective travellers that steamers plied the east coast fortnightly from Sydney to Noumea and Fiji, and that each month two services carried mail between Cooktown and 'all ports' on the New Guinea coast from Samarai to Mabudawan 'The knowledge of [that] country', the handbook warned, 'is still very incomplete in many particulars, as its inhabitants are only just emerging from a state of barbarism.'

Alongside those expected references to 'barbarism', I had hoped to find examples of empathy and references to a 'shared humanity', correctives to the dominant narratives of colonial arrogance. One of the most heartening of those emerged from the shelves of the Dixson collection. Caroline David was a teacher and the wife of the renowned Australian-based geologist Tannant William Edgeworth David, with whom she travelled to Funafuti in the Ellice Islands, now Tuvalu, in 1897. Edgeworth David's aim was to prove or disprove Charles Darwin's theory on the formation of coral reefs.

Caroline's handsome 1899 book about the trip, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island: An Unscientific Account of a Scientific Expedition*, is wonderfully wry and humane. 'The map labelled the islands British by putting a pink line under the name ... if the black people kill and eat us, we shall be avenged!' she writes. 'We found afterwards that the Ellice Islanders hadn't the faintest desire to kill and eat us; on the contrary, they were quite as civilised as most white folks ...' Caroline was customarily adopted as a daughter by a woman called Tufaina: 'she told me that I was good, that she loved me, that she was my mother. I thanked her, said that I loved and respected her and was proud to be her daughter.'

Papua became an Australian colony and New Guinea a mandated territory in 1914, after Australian soldiers expelled their German counterparts. The Library holds Sir Hubert Murray's correspondence from his years as Lieutenant Governor of Papua, from 1908 to 1940, as well as the diaries of planters and patrol officers in New Guinea. All evince the intellectual twists and turns of an industrial culture coming to terms with pre-industrial societies at a time when colonial responsibility was evolving from control to assisted development.

I worked my way chronologically through these papers, ending with the postwar diaries, lecture notes and publications of James McAuley. That Australian man of letters is best remembered for his role in the Ern Malley affair, the literary hoax that aimed to torpedo the pretensions of modernism. Less appreciated is McAuley's career as an educator and commentator on Australia's role in Papua and New Guinea.

In the years after the Second World War, McAuley lectured at the Australian School of Pacific Administration and wrote sensitively about the territories in periodicals including *South Pacific*. He argued for the incorporation of Papua and New Guinea into Australia at a time when race-based immigration law still precluded easy travel from the former to the latter. His time there also influenced his politics and philosophy: he converted to Catholicism after meeting French missionaries, and became a fierce critic of the modern secular liberalism that elevated the individual over the community, the rational over tradition and faith.

After leaving the Australian School of Pacific Administration to take up an academic position in 1961, McAuley described with regret and foreboding 'the great drama of the disintegration of traditional cultures' that put into relief 'every question about the nature of man and society'. It was a profound expression of empathy and recognition that bridged what many still regarded as a cultural chasm. The conservative James McAuley was able to find a common humanity in the Pacific where so many other Australians still saw difference.

Ian Hoskins was the State Library's 2019 CH Currey Fellow. His latest book is *Australia and the Pacific* (NewSouth Publishing, June 2021).



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Burns Philp Pacific cruise advertisement, *The Home* magazine, 2 January 1936

WORDS Alice Tonkinson

Distant peaks

A map of the Pacific rewards close contemplation.

Of the thousands of maps in the State Library's collection, Aaron Arrowsmith's *Chart of the Pacific Ocean* is one of the most compelling. Made up of nine sheets and measuring more than two metres long, it's as spectacular to look at today as it would have been when it was created in 1798. Even among the few surviving copies of the first edition, this print is particularly beautiful, with the coastlines delicately hand-coloured in shades of blue and green.

The Arrowsmith family firm was one of London's pre-eminent publishers of maps in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Aaron, the firm's founder, established the company's reputation by producing large-scale, detailed charts that were frequently updated with the most current and credible information. Matthew Flinders was among the navigators who used them.

When it was published, this chart was the highest quality map of the Pacific available. Its scale allowed space to track more than 20 expeditions and voyages, which appear like threads stitched across the paper. It also includes

jottings gathered from European explorations over the preceding 200 years. Along the track of Cook's first voyage, for example, an annotation reads, 'Saw a Seal asleep upon the water and several bunches of Seaweed.'

One of the most arresting features of the map is its decorative 'cartouche'. This illustrated frame around the title depicts an imaginary Pacific island as a romantic idyll. Nestled among the vegetation are a kangaroo, llamas, beavers and what appear to be eastern quolls. These drawings present the Pacific as a rich field for the study of natural history.

Aside from visual wonders, a whaling scene points to resources for commercial exploitation. Flags have been hoisted on distant peaks, a reminder of the colonial aspirations underpinning European voyages. Although a Tahitian sailing canoe can be seen near the shore, there is no evidence of indigenous peoples on the island. The images in the cartouche demonstrate the role of maps in imposing a European vision and agenda on the lands and seas they depict.

Its considerable size has meant that Arrowsmith's chart is not often exhibited, making the forthcoming exhibition *Maps of the Pacific* a rare chance to see this complex historical artefact up close.

Alice Tonkinson is co-curator of *Maps of the Pacific*, a free exhibition at the Library opening 10 July 2021.





Alice Tonkinson examines the Arrowship map of the Pacific from 1798, photo by Joy Lai

WORDS Steve Meacham

Woman of spice

Long before *Masterchef* and *My Kitchen Rules* and *Great Bake Offs*, a homegrown celebrity cook introduced the newly federated Australia to a horizon of taste, practicality and sophistication.

Hannah Maclurcan — an antipodean version of the famous British cookbook author Isabella Beeton — wasn't the first Australian to publish a cookbook with the ingredients and for the climate of this harsh southern land.

She was the first, however, to become bestselling author, household name, fashion icon, entrepreneur, society-page queen.

And, in 1912, she may have been the first woman to become managing director of an Australian publicly listed company.

Her great-grandson John Maclurcan has spent more hours than he can count researching Hannah's life — much of it in the State Library. He compares his great-grandmother to British food writer and TV cook Nigella Lawson. Both were born Jewish, lived initially in the shadow of supportive but formidable fathers, and had marriages that ended in illness and infamy.

Through their ability to share their love of cooking with a mass audience (which, in Hannah's time, was mainly female), both women also eclipsed their

fathers. (Who today recalls that Nigella's father was Margaret Thatcher's Chancellor of the Exchequer?)

Hannah's cookbooks will never sell as many copies as Nigella's. Yet when she presented a copy of her second book, *The 20th Century Cookery Book*, to Queen Victoria in 1901 (designed for the British market with less kangaroo and more venison) she was already a publishing phenomenon.

Her first book, *Mrs Maclurcan's Cookery Book*, had been self-published in 1898 in Queensland, three decades after Mrs Beeton's tome had its first Australian edition. Unlike the Englishwoman's volume, which assumed that readers had well-stocked stores nearby, her book was subtitled:

'A Collection of Practical Recipes Suitable for Australia'.

But when Hannah sailed to Sydney and Melbourne in search of a publisher, she met with no success.

'In fact, she was advised to save her money by burning her manuscript,' says Karen Bates, who has charted Maclurcan's life in Australian culinary history.

'Undaunted, Hannah returned to Townsville, hired a local printer, set her own typeface and published 756 recipes which she had perfected cooking in hotel kitchens. The first edition of 2000 copies sold out within eight weeks. The second edition of 4000 had sold by Christmas.'

Reviewers praised Hannah for her 'terse and plain language', her 'tasty, appetising and attractive' dishes, and for producing 'a cookery-book adapted to

colonial resources'. The most quoted endorsement? 'A foe to indigestion.'

It's easy to lampoon her for her old-fashioned fare, but here's a typical meal for 50 guests she served at the Queen's Hotel in Townsville for the visit of the Governor-General, Lord Lamington:

Starters: Oysters; beche-de-mer soup, boiled barramundi and oyster sauce, whiting fillet

Entree: Pate de foie gras, oyster patties, spatchcock

Joints: Roast sirloin beef and horse radish, roast saddle mutton and red currant jelly, boiled leg mutton and caper sauce, boiled round beef, tongue and ham

Poultry: Roast turkey and truffles, roast duckling and green peas, roast wild goose with port wine sauce

Savouries: Devilled prawns, anchovy canapés

Sweets: Trifle, tipsy cake, strawberry jelly, cheesecake, gooseberry fool

To finish: Crab a la Francoise, cheese soufflé, devilled almond, cheese straws, celery, Gorgonzola, lobster salad, fruits in season, preserved fruits and 'ices'

So much for 'foe to indigestion'!

'Hannah realised you could build a hotel's reputation by the quality of its food,' says her great-grandson. 'She learned that lesson long before she took over Sydney's Wentworth Hotel, turning it into one of the finest elite hotels in the southern hemisphere.'

Take beche-de-mer soup. 'The humble sea slug was a delicacy in China,' Bates explains. 'Hannah also





The 20th Century Cookery Book: A thousand practical recipes for everyday use, 1901, by Hannah Maclurcan

experimented with seafood, tropical fruits and native plants mainly eaten by Indigenous locals.'

Born in October 1860 near Hill End in New South Wales, Hannah was the product of Australia's gold rushes.

Her London-born father, Jacob Aaron Phillips, understood that the secret to becoming rich in mining towns was not by toiling underground but by becoming a shopkeeper or a hotelier. Phillips moved to Queensland, anticipating where hopeless dreamers would stake their next claim.

Hannah was the fourth child of Phillips and his first wife, Susan Moses, who died when her daughter was six. Always street-smart, Hannah was so proficient as a hotelier that at 15 she was appointed manager of the Osbourne Hotel at Sandgate, a coastal resort on the outskirts of Brisbane.

Her first marriage in 1880, to an English-born ne'er-do-well, left her the single mother of two young daughters. In 1887, she married Donald Maclurcan, a master mariner who fathered her youngest two children. Donald's name might have been registered as the hotel licensee, but everyone knew Hannah was the boss.

Thanks to her cookbook (18 editions in 30 years) Hannah took her biggest gamble in 1901, leasing Sydney's Wentworth Hotel, then little more than a glorified boarding

house. After Donald died in 1903, Hannah transformed the Wentworth into arguably the finest hotel south of the Equator. Her innovations were legendary, particularly once she became managing director of the limited company set up in 1912 to administer the Wentworth and acquire the freehold.

She introduced the New York-style a la carte menu to Australia, freeing diners from staid hotel sittings and enabling them to have their personal selections cooked to order 'between 11am and 11pm'.

She purchased neighbouring land to create an elegant al fresco dining area where ladies who lunched could be seen in all their fashionable glory, before converting the site into the Wentworth Ballroom (where the Prince of Wales danced at its official opening in 1920).

She added extra storeys and installed one of the first lifts in Australia (the *Sydney Morning Herald* ran a story on this technological marvel). She also launched the *Wentworth Magazine*, a glossy periodical with contributions from fashionable painters and authors, theatre reviews for those planning an overnight stay, and bridal fashions.

Sadly, her entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* is sour. Though acknowledging she was one of the first hoteliers in Australia to add a 400-vehicle

car park with petrol pump as well as an outlet selling lingerie, hosiery and those 'toiletry trifles a man may have forgotten to pack', the entry dwells on Hannah's 'shameless' courting of celebrities and 'the stodgy depths to which Australian middle-class cooking had descended' by the 1920s.

Naturally, it includes her final marriage in 1931 to a third Englishman, Robert Lee, a decade her junior, who her great-grandson describes as a scoundrel. 'When she died in 1936 the family had a devil of a job dealing with him. Fortunately, he died not long after her.'

Hannah's Wentworth is no more, but her cookbooks are a wonderful reminder of an era when the perfect recipe for a fricassee of sheep's brains was as valuable as a lesson in how to serve an acceptable cucumber sandwich ('First cut the bread very fine').

Ultimately, Hannah's legacy is the bold step she took in 1912, 'taking Sydney's finest hotel to the stockmarket, and being appointed managing director with plans to expand it to even greater heights,' John Maclurcan says. 'Isn't it amazing she achieved that two years before World War I?'

Steve Meacham is a Sydney-based freelance writer.

Opposite inset: Mrs Hannah Maclurcan, 1898, unknown photographer, via CityLibraries Townsville

WORDS Amanda Laugesen

Strike me pink!

Has news of the demise of Australian English been greatly exaggerated?

In 1935 an Australian radio listener turned on their wireless after two months away and assumed it must be picking up America. Signing off as ‘Disgusted’ of Neutral Bay, the listener complained on the *Wireless Weekly* letters page (dubbed ‘The Safety Valve’) that American slang was taking over the airwaves. Why was it, ‘Disgusted’ asked, that the station should ‘inflict 15 minutes of American slang, impossibilities and gangsters on to us’?

Complaints like this were common between the two world wars. With the advent of the ‘talkies’ and with many households now owning a radio, Australians felt the growing presence of American popular culture. Wider concerns about Americanisation crystallised around the use of language. The presence of US troops during the Second World War compounded this recurring worry, and ‘oh yeah’, ‘attaboy’ and ‘gee’ were among the expressions singled out in the press.

Since the 1890s Australia’s distinctive lexicon, including its slang, had increasingly been seen as a source of celebration. The language used by the characters in Steele Rudd’s ‘Dad ‘n Dave’ stories and Banjo Paterson’s verse was not necessarily taken up by the average person — social prestige was still attached to British English and more refined accents — but it was seen as ‘authentically Australian’.

This pride in Australian English came with a perception that it was open to displacement, and this idea still surfaces today. While American speech has been a recurring bogeyman, more recent concerns include the effects of social media

and texting. A persistent lament is that our local vocabulary is under threat, even on its way out. But how true is this?

I work on the *Australian National Dictionary*, which records Australian words and their origins. It aims to include all Australianisms, including not only words that originated in Australia, but also words used more frequently in Australia than elsewhere, and words that have special significance in Australia. We’re currently hard at work on the third edition — the second edition was published in 2016, with some 16,000 headwords suggesting the extent of the Australian English lexicon.

Despite the reassuring number, it would be fair to say that many Australian words have disappeared from our vocabulary. But this is natural in any language, and is particularly true of slang, which often tends to be ephemeral. *Bonzer*, for example, meaning good, was first recorded in 1903 and became ubiquitous in early twentieth-century Australian society. Variants at the time included *bontosher*, *bonzalina*, *boshter* and *bonsterina*. But while you may occasionally hear *bonzer* today, it would likely be used pretty self-consciously: few Australians would use it as part of their everyday vocabulary.

Some words have fallen into obscurity for a good reason. Consider the female forms of common words for types of people that were around a century ago: *Australienne*, *larrikiness*, and *wowserina*. They are now (rightly) obsolete. Other words that were used widely in Australian English a generation or two ago — like *cobber*, *drongo* and *grouse*, and expressions such as *strike me pink* and *stone the crows* — don’t seem to be as common as they once were.

But even though some typically — or perhaps stereotypically — Australian words are falling, or have fallen, out of use, that doesn’t mean Australian English is under threat, or that the incursions of American slang or the effects of social media are to blame.



Illustration by Fiona Katauskas

Our current database of potential new entries runs into the thousands. Some are ‘old’ words that were previously missed, but the majority have come into Australian English over the past few decades. They relate to almost all areas of Australian life, from sport, to life in the outback, to First Nations culture.

For better or worse, politics and politicians regularly add to our lexicon. Recent contributions include *democracy sausage*, *Canberra bubble* and *quiet Australian*, the latter two popularised by Prime Minister Scott Morrison. Social trends have thrown up terms such as *fauxgan* (a fake bogan), *latte belt* and *smashed avo*. Abbreviated forms ending in ‘-ie/y’ and ‘-o’, a common feature of Australian English, continue to appear – for example, I recently collected quotes from the memoirs of AFL players Nick Riewoldt and Jarryd Roughead in which they use the word *granny* for the Grand Final.

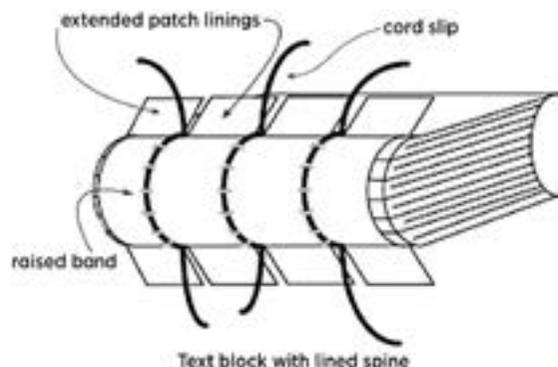
Concerns that we no longer produce uniquely Australian slang aren’t borne out by the number of new words we’re adding to our lists, including *dack*, to steal; *shang*, to give someone something; *flog*, an idiot; and *razzle*, an RSL club. Things that could only be Australian, such as the *thongophone*, *Tim Tam slam* and *shoey* (popularised by Daniel Ricciardo when he had Formula One wins) are other new additions.

We’re tracking many words relating to First Nations history, culture and contemporary life, as well as words from Aboriginal languages. Possible new entries include terms such as *Indigenous nation*, *knowledge-holders*, *law place* and many other compounds based on Country, knowledge and law. While words from Aboriginal languages have featured in Australian English from the period of Invasion, we continue to identify more new words entering the Australian English lexicon from these languages. These include Aboriginal words for flora, fauna, the environment and the weather, as well as words relating to First Nations spirituality and culture, including many Dreaming words.

All in all, I would have to say that Australian English is thriving. While Australians use a lot of slang that’s also used elsewhere, we also continue to generate distinctive slang. But the richness of Australian English is broader than this, and our diverse society, First Nations peoples and popular culture ensure that we continue to add to our lexicon.

Amanda Laugesen is the Director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre, ANU. Her latest book is *Rooted: An Australian History of Bad Language* (NewSouth, 2020).

WORDS Maggie Patton



Spine tingling

Looking closely at the spine could unlock the mystery of a rare book, or it could raise more questions.

In the earliest libraries, in medieval times, books were placed horizontally on shelves with their spines facing inwards.

But as more books were being produced in the sixteenth century, storage became a bigger challenge. More books could fit on shelves if they were upright and tightly packed together, which focused attention on the spine – the central support structure that holds the book together like the spine of the human body. A well-designed spine became an opportunity for booksellers to promote their publications, for binders to show off their skills, and for collectors to create the ultimate personal ‘shelfie’.

Before modern bookbinding, most books were held together by sewing the ‘gatherings’, or sets, of pages onto

supporting strips of leather or cord. These strips were sometimes hidden by cutting grooves in the back of the text block made up of all the gatherings. In other books, the strips were left to stand out from the text block, so when the binding material was placed over the spine, the strips formed a series of ridges that bookbinders call bands.

The shape, number and thickness of the bands on a spine often gives a clue to the age of the binding. Thick bands standing proud of the spine gradually disappeared towards the end of the seventeenth century, with lighter cord replacing the leather. The bands provided a perfect frame for the skills of the binder as they practised their tooling and gilding skills. Binders eventually developed techniques to hide the cords completely and create a smooth spine.

The way in which the title is placed on the spine has also varied over time. From the sixteenth century, the title of a book appeared horizontally near the top of the spine, often abbreviated to fit. Sometimes

the title was written or tooled directly onto the spine, or a paper label was used.

By the eighteenth century, it was common for a spine label to be made from a thin piece of coloured leather. The title and author’s name would be tooled in gold onto the label, which was then fixed to the spine.

Styles of spine decoration changed over the centuries, and in older collections it’s almost possible to date a shelf of books simply by examining them. But collectors should take care: the spine is the weakest point in a book’s structure. It might have been replaced due to overuse, or rebanded to suit the latest fashions in bookbinding.

Colour-coding bookshelves may be fashionable today, but that’s hardly a challenge compared to arranging by leather type, lettering or golden lustre!

Maggie Patton is the Library’s rare books expert.



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1. *Marooned on Australia*, 1896, by Ernest Favenc — pictorial cloth binding

2. *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 1667 — leather binding with raised bands, each compartment with gilt fillets and tooling

3. *Hunter's historische Nachrichten*, 1794, by John Hunter — marbled paper binding with printed paper label with gilt lettering

4. *L'office de la Semaine Sainte*, 1698 — red morocco with raised bands, compartments gilt tooled with fleur-de-lys motifs

5. *Tales of the Old Regime and The Bullet of the Fated Ten*, 1897, by Price Warung — pictorial paper binding

6. *Les oeuvres de François Villon*, 1723 — brown mottled calf with smooth spine, diagonal gilt fillets, creating a net effect, red and green leather labels

7. *Breve trattato del mondo, et delle sve parti, semplici, et miste*, 1571, by Giasone De Nores (16th Century) — original parchment smooth spine, handwritten title and shelf number

8. *The Art of Warre*, 1639, by the Lord of Praissac — plain leather with slightly raised bands, red label with gilt lettering

9. *The Image of Bothe Churches: Hierusalem and Babel, vnitie and confusion, obedienc and sedition*, 1623, by Matthew Pattenson — original plain vellum with slightly raised bands

10. *The Golden Treasury*, 1904, by Francis Turner Palgrave — red morocco with raised bands and ornate floral gilt tooling and title, by Riviere & Sons

11. *L'art de nager*, 1782 by Melchisédec Thévenot — brown leather with smooth spine, gold fillets and tooling creating a chevron pattern, red leather label



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12. *Poems, Epistles and Songs: chiefly in the Scottish dialect*, 1788, by Robert Galloway — dark blue cloth binding with paper label

13. *Idiomatologia anglo-latina, sive, Dictionarium idiomatum anglo-latinum*, 1690, by William Walker — smooth vellum spine, hand-painted compartments, tulip motif

14. *Poesie volgari: novamente stampate*, 1554, by Lorenzo de' Medici — original parchment with raised bands, red gilded label

15. *Histoire des Sevarambes, peuples qui habitent une partie du troisième continent, communément appelé la Terre australe*, 1715, by Denis Vairasse D'Allais — plain calf binding with raised bands, gilt fillets, red title and volume labels

16. *Franciscii Xauerii Epistolarum libri quatuor*, 1600, by Francis Xavier — brown calf with raised bands, gilt tooling, initials I A M stand for French book collector Jacques-Auguste de Thou and his first wife Marie Barbancon

17. *Chronologia historiae Herodoti et Thucydidis*, 1573, by David Chytraeus — original vellum with smooth spine

18. *Kim*, 1942, by Rudyard Kipling — red leather with raised bands, gilt decoration, bound by Gordon Hughes, 1954

19. *Emma: a novel*, 1816, by Jane Austen — white paper spine with printed paper label

20. *History of the Otaheitean Islands*, 1880 — speckled calf with slightly raised bands, gilt tooling with thistle motif, red title label

21. *The Secret of the Australian Desert*, 1896, by Ernest Favenc — pictorial cloth binding

22. *Sancti Prosperi presbyteri Aquitanici aduersus inimicos gratiæ dei libellus*, 1524, by Prosper de Aquitania — smooth spine bound with recycled parchment fragment of medieval music

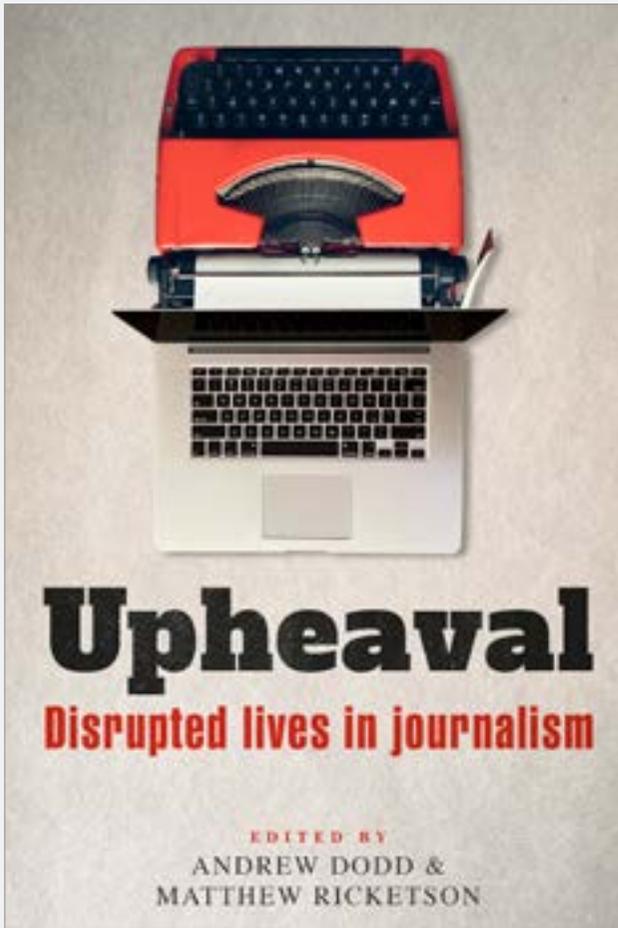
23. *Hawbuck Grange or The Sporting Adventures of Thomas Scott, Esq.*, 1847, by the author of Handley Cross [RS Surtees] — pictorial red cloth binding illustrated by 'Phiz'

20 questions

- 1 A festschrift is something you can: a) wear b) read c) eat
- 2 Jamie Marina Lau's debut novel which was shortlisted for the Stella prize in 2019 is called _____ Mountain on Locust Island. Hint: It's a colour.
- 3 Kathleen Butler was the only woman present at the opening of tenders for which Sydney landmark?
- 4 Who remarked that Australian history 'does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies'?
- 5 Pip and Judy appear in which 1894 children's novel by Ethel Turner?
- 6 Which dance company takes its name from the Wiradjuri word that means 'to make fire'?
- 7 Author of *Reckoning: A Memoir* Magda Szubanski was born in which city: a) Warsaw, Poland b) Liverpool, England c) Melbourne, Australia
- 8 Artist and activist Oodgeroo Noonuccal once wrote poetry on a hijacked plane. True or false?
- 9 Which Catherine is a patron saint of libraries and librarians? a) Saint Catherine of Siena b) Saint Catherine of Bologna c) Saint Catherine of Alexandria
- 10 The first song played on radio station 2JJ in 1975 was by: a) The Saints b) Sherbet c) Skyhooks
- 11 Which item of clothing did poet Les Murray describe as 'spirituality with pockets'?
- 12 Who said: 'You discover how confounding the world is when you try to draw it'? a) May Gibbs b) Shaun Tan c) Judy Horacek
- 13 Author of *The Family Law*, Benjamin Law wrote a sex and relationship advice book with: a) his doctor b) his mother c) his sister
- 14 The bohemian and anarchic network opposed to the State, the Church, wowsers of the Menzies era, and censorship was called The Sydney ____ a) Stirrers b) Agitators c) Push
- 15 What national event is scheduled for Tuesday 10 August 2021?
- 16 Author of *Under a Mackerel Sky* restaurateur Rick Stein once worked in: a) a book shop in Dubbo b) an abattoir in Roma c) a fish market in Hobart
- 17 A treaty signed in 1959 states which area is to be used for 'peaceful purposes only'?
- 18 Allen & Unwin's new imprint, headed up by Gamillaroi/Torres Strait Islander writer, actor and director Nakkiah Lui, is called what?
- 19 In what year did the first-known performance of theatrical magic in Australia take place? a) 1806 b) 1836 c) 1936
- 20 According to author Rick Morton, what is the opposite of kindness?

Find the answers to this quiz at the bottom of page 97.





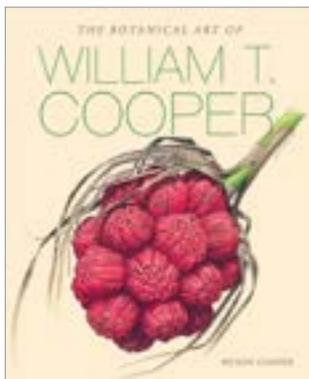
Upheaval: Disrupted Lives in Journalism

edited by Andrew Dodd and
Matthew Ricketson

UNSW Press

Everyone, it seems, has an opinion on the press. Too biased. Too fake. Too conservative or too 'woke'. Too free. Not free enough.

When the original *Australian* newspaper was founded in Sydney in 1824 by lawyers Robert Wardell and William Charles Wentworth, the first edition declared that 'individual influence is apt to luxuriate and flourish where there exists no corrective to check its exuberance or prevent its growth'. A free press, it went on, 'is the most legitimate, and at the same time the most powerful weapon that can be employed to annihilate such influence, frustrate the designs of tyranny, and restrain the arm of oppression'.



The Botanical Art of William T Cooper

by Wendy Cooper
NLA publishing

As someone with a bird phobia, I'm generally pretty safe working as a curator at the Library. But when I open a box of William Cooper's original bird paintings

held here, I sometimes take a deep breath: the glistening feathers, the scaly legs, the sharp beaks. I can almost see them move. World renowned for his paintings of birds, Cooper, who died in 2015, also produced extraordinarily detailed, sumptuous drawings of Australian rainforest plants. This new book by the artist's wife and frequent co-author, botanist Wendy Cooper, is a beautiful celebration of their shared passion and skill.

Elise Edmonds



Night Blue

by Angela O'Keeffe
Transit Lounge

Angela O'Keeffe's *Night Blue* is wrapped in Jackson Pollock's painting *Blue Poles*. The book's covers fold out to reveal the 1952 painting purchased by the Australian government in 1973, so you hold the painting in your hands while you read. The controversial painting is

also a compelling narrator in the book, entwined with the voice of the character Alyssa and the echoes of time and place that run through their stories. This cleverly imagined and beautifully written novel invites readers to re-engage with art and its place in our lives.

Kathleen Alexander

As the first of the colony's newspapers to reject the censorship role of the Secretary to the Governor, the *Australian* sparked a series of furious debates with authorities and readers about the role of the press.

Ideas of an independent and free press are still firmly held by many people, but these principles are increasingly seen as idealistic in an industry that is under enormous pressure. Technological change, job losses and a public accustomed to information saturation have changed how news is reported and consumed.

In his work on press ideology, media historian Steven Chibnall wrote that 'by and large, journalists share the same stock of common sense knowledge as their readers. They are not responsible for its creation, although they do contribute towards its stability and survival.' This can be easy to forget, as our personal reactions to news events rarely

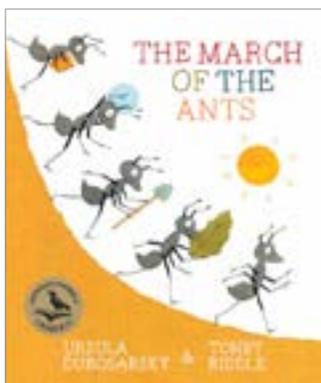
consider those who craft and distribute the articles that narrate the world around us. The work of Andrew Dodd and Matthew Ricketson, editors of *Upheaval*, turn the tables by bringing us into contact with the stories of more than 50 journalists. Suddenly, we see the news from the other side of the page or screen.

This book reinforces much of what we think we know about the press. You can hear the chaos of newsrooms, feel the pressure of deadlines, and sense the need to get the story – accurately and impartially – out while it's still news. But Dodd and Ricketson have also brought together histories that challenge a few old-fashioned stereotypes. The cranky and crass newsroom manager appears in the book, but these are not just the words of old men in trench coats with spiral notebooks. In fact, one of book's strengths is its inclusion of women as strong contributors to the industry.

One of the many wonderful anecdotes in *Upheaval* comes from Lynne Dwyer, who was taught journalism in the 1980s by Peter Temple. Now known for his award-winning crime fiction, Temple would calmly murder the occasional student when marking. 'He was brilliant but he scarred everybody,' Dwyer remembers. 'He was very harsh and very cynical, and we all loved him.' Many students kept the essays he had marked, even with comments like 'Have you thought of another career?'

Amid all the ambition, anxiety and financial pressure, there remains among journalists a genuine passion for finding the stories that matter and a commitment to keeping the ideals of the press at the centre of an ever-changing industry. This is a terrific book for anyone who cares about the news and the people who bring it to us.

Dr Rachel Franks



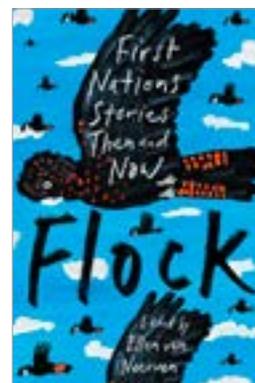
The March of the Ants

written by Ursula Dubosarsky
illustrated by Tohby Riddle
Book Trail Press

The ants are heading off on a long and arduous journey, but are they well prepared? And what is the

most important thing to pack – a map, tools or a book? This delightful story began life when Ursula Dubosarsky was chosen as the Australian Children's Laureate in 2020. It was quickly picked up by Book Trail Press and published as a beautiful picture book with charming illustrations by Tohby Riddle. This gentle tale of determination and fortitude celebrates the magical power of stories to sustain us in challenging times.

Pauline Fitzgerald



Flock

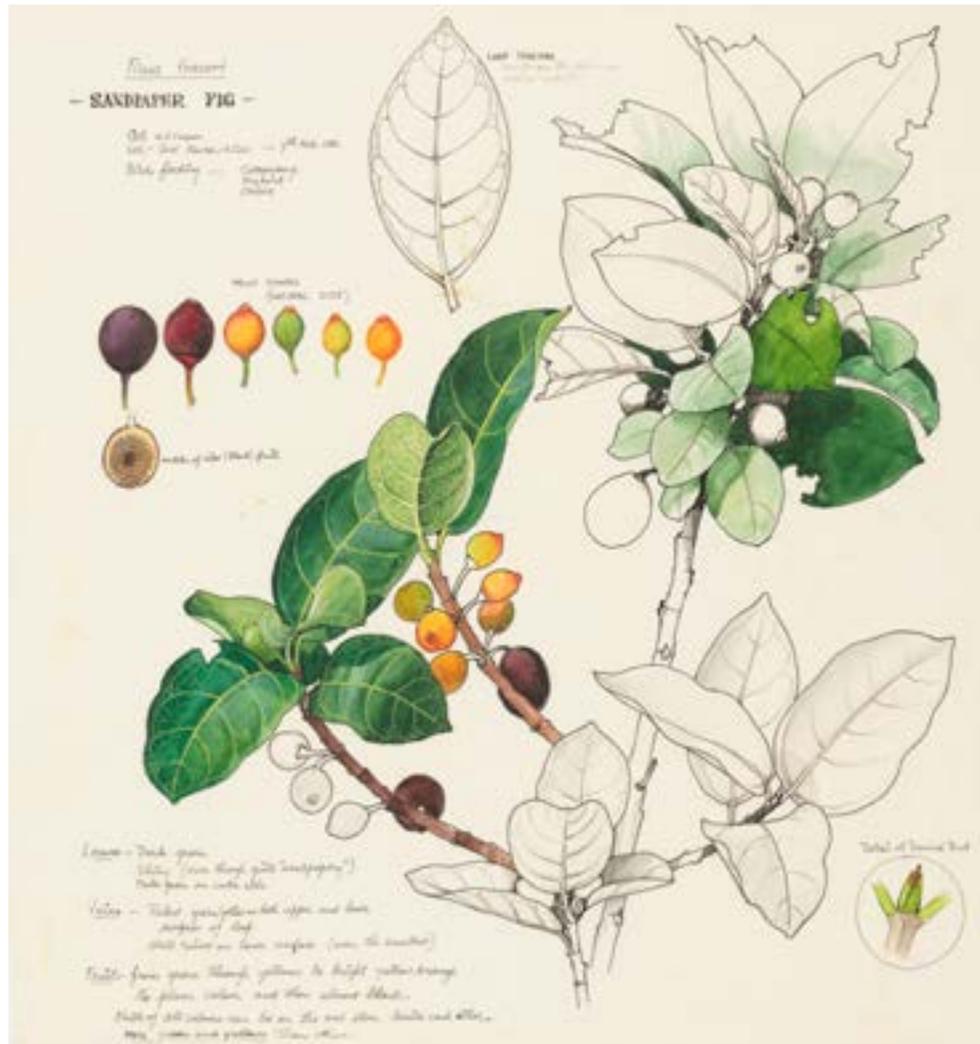
edited by
Ellen van Neerven
UQP

Voices of First Nations writers from across the continent are brought together in *Flock: First Nations Stories Then and Now*. Ellen van Neerven has selected pieces by established and emerging authors published between 1996 and 2021. 'Cloud Busting'

by Tara June Winch affects me just as viscerally today as when I first read it in her 2006 debut *Swallow the Air*. And the vivid inner worlds of the characters in Mykaela Saunders' 'River Story' also stopped me in my tracks. The experiences and wisdom of lifetimes have been wrought into perfect short stories.

Marika Duczynski

Lush forests



Some 40 works in the Library's collection by renowned natural history artist William T Cooper will be travelling back to their home state, Queensland, in August for the first major exhibition to celebrate Cooper's botanical art. The exhibition at Cairns Art Gallery will focus on Cooper's illustrations of tropical rainforests in north Queensland. It is co-curated by botanist Wendy Cooper, wife of the late artist, who recently published a book on Cooper's botanical works (see page 80). Although he was best known for his paintings of birds, William T Cooper was also a masterful botanical artist, producing rich illustrations of Australian rainforest fruits and plants.

**William T Cooper's artworks are on display at Cairns Art Gallery
from 28 August to 5 December 2021.**

Avid developers



While mermaids frolic and yachts bob at their moorings, an ominous group of developers hoves into view with their notepads and plans. We can see the blur of high-rise behind them, and presume they want more of it. Hungarian-born artist and illustrator George Molnar was uniquely qualified to comment on Sydney architecture. Not only was he a cartoonist at the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* for some 30 years, he was also an architect and university lecturer. This watercolour was part of his 'Developers in the City' series in the 1980s.

'Harbour Survey by Developers', c 1980s, by George Molnar, courtesy Katie Molnar

Tiny morsel



Are you the kind of cook who looks recipes up online, but still loves a beautifully presented cookbook? This pocket-sized gem of cottage cookery, originally published in 1881, has a focus on cakes and jellies. As it measures just 55 x 47 mm, we're not sure about the practicality of Matilda Lees Dods' *Handbook of Practical Cookery*. A teacher at the South Kensington School of Cookery, Dods' talks in the manufacturing towns of northern England and Scotland attracted up to 1000 people – a nineteenth-century precursor to streaming lifestyle shows.

Morning sun



A local of Sydney's eastern suburbs, the artist Herbert Badham delighted in the ordinary details of his surroundings. His painting *South Head* shows Vaucluse and Watsons Bay in the 1930s, before the area was transformed by development and population growth. The morning sun casts shadows over Federation era houses, as smoke rises from some of the residences, and a cart disappears behind a house. Showing the artist's technical ability, this painting complements the Library's significant collection of Badham's oil paintings.



Two Villas, Burwood (north elevation), 1882, Edmund Thomas Blacket

History of a house

Have you ever wondered who lived in your house before you? Our librarians help you discover the story of your home — from the streets and suburbs around it, to the people who sheltered inside.

STEP 1 What do you know?

Make a list of everything you already know about the history of your house. Can you find clues in the architectural features, building materials and floorplan? Are there any documents from when you purchased your property that might help?

STEP 2 What do other people know?

If your house is heritage listed, especially State heritage listed, information will have already been collated on its history. Check on the New South Wales Heritage Register. There are other places where heritage listings may occur such as local council and community organisations, for example the National Trust. This is explained on the Heritage NSW website.

STEP 3 Who came before?

Finding out about previous occupants of a house can be an interesting and enlightening project. Using the *Sands Sydney and NSW Directory* you may be able to trace who has lived at your address and their occupation. Searching their name in newspapers on Trove can turn up information about your home, like DA applications or of a business being run from the property. You might also find that the previous owner had some colourful life events. The Sands directory can also shed light on when streets were named or when suburbs were divided. This will help with STEP FOUR.

The Sands directories were published between 1858 and 1933 and are available on microfiche in the Library and have been digitised in full by the City of Sydney.

The free website Historical Land Records Viewer produced by NSW Land Registry Services can also assist you to find some previous land titles from 1863 to 1961.

STEP 4 Is there a plan (or a map)?

If your house was architect-designed, then the architectural plans may still exist. They might be with the original design company or even in the State Library's collection. Although this will not be the case for most houses, you might still be able to find a plan that matches your house (or a variation of it) produced by services and publications like the Small Homes Service (NSW), Grace Bros Home Plans Service or *Australian Women's Weekly*. These can help you narrow down the date of your house.

It is more likely that you will be able to find a subdivision plan for your area, street and even your lot. A subdivision plan can help you to understand the growth and development of your suburb or town and show how land in your area was subdivided and sold over the years. They can also be beautifully illustrated, making them perfect for framing and hanging in your home.

The Library holds county and parish maps, as well as town maps dating back to 1856 until 1990. Some of these parish and town maps have been digitised and are available on our catalogue, and some are available on the Historical Land Records Viewer.

STEP 5 What did they pay?

For financial details relating to your home or property you can look for rate and valuation books, which are held by local councils. These can include information such as your rate assessment number, house number within a street, names of occupier/lessee and owner, description of property type, valuation amounts and details of the levying and payment of rates over the years.

These records generally have not been digitised by councils, so you may need to make an appointment with council to review them. You could also speak to your council to find out what they hold in relation to Building Applications and Rate and Assessment Books for your property.

Pro tips

Starting out

Record everything you find and where you found it as you go. This will save you doubling back over resources.

Pretty pictures

While finding a historical photograph of your house can be hard, we do have a very extensive collection of images where you might find shots of your local area. This can give you a sense of how the area has developed over the years. You should also check out the local studies section of your local library or your local historical society to see what gems they have in their collection.



'I'm interested in knowing more about the history of my local area. There's a really old home in my neighbourhood, could it provide any clues?'

SARA FROM OATLEY
Re: 34 Waratah Street, Oatley, NSW 2223

Searching this address in the State Heritage Inventory showed that it was listed and provided details of when the building was constructed, its architectural style, its significance in the history of the local area and even the names of past owners.

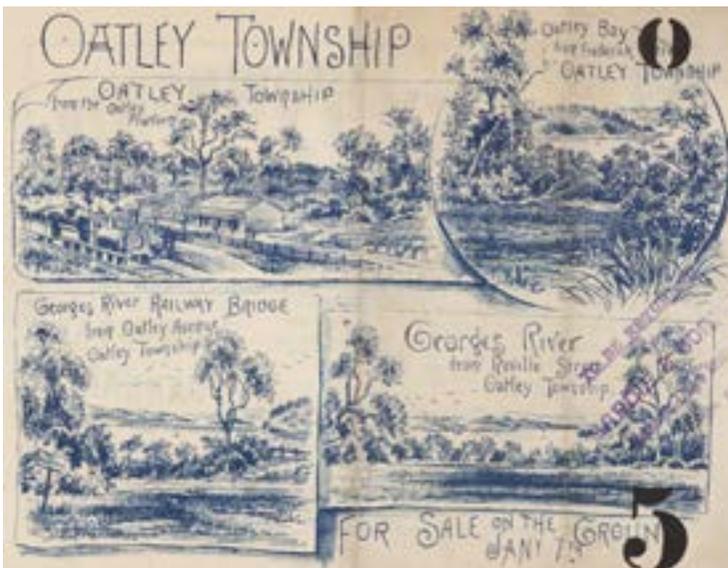
'Part of the New Oatley Township 1886 subdivision of James Oatley's 300-acre grant, the subject building Merlewood was constructed by 1926. It was owned and occupied by William Joseph Desmond. In 1962 it was owned and occupied by Mrs Nancy Ellen Evans'.

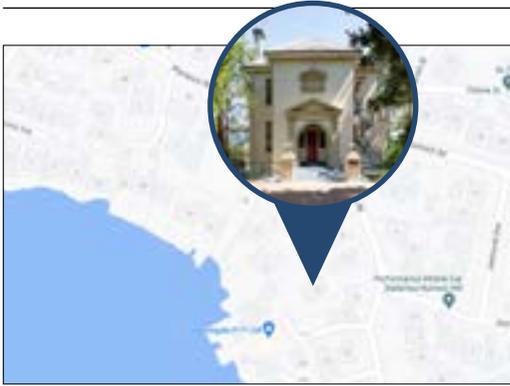


'I was told the first Mayor of Marrickville lived in my house. Is that true?'

JULIEANNE FROM PETERSHAM
Re: 52 Livingstone Road, Petersham, NSW 2049

The first Mayor of Marrickville was Gerald Halligan who died in 1886. According to the Sands directories from around that time, a David W Higgins in 'Bayswater' and a surgeon named J Molz in 'Rothstella' were the only two residents listed as owning properties around that address. This subdivision plan from Saturday 29 July 1882 shows the location of both these properties, neither of which are in the lot that is now 52. It is not until 1915 when the first listing for a 52 Livingstone Road appears in Sands, and it is a Frederick WE Gabriel who is named as the resident. Another illustrated subdivision plan from the local area shows how the area may have looked at this time. An interesting note, the property is listed with the name 'Dalkeith' and the first time this property appears in the Sands is in 1910 when a Harold M Mallett is listed as the resident. As far as we can tell neither resident had any connection to the late Mayor.

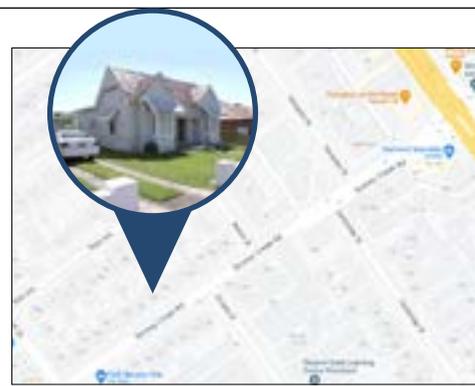




'I just moved into an apartment that looks like it was once a large old stately home. I don't know much about it but the word "Bentham" appears above the entrance.'

GEOFF FROM HUNTERS HILL
Re: 13 Wybalena Road, Hunters Hill, NSW 2110

Looking at subdivision plans of the area we found one from 1918 which clearly shows the location of a 'Bentham' house on the map. It also includes the name AG Cureton Esq next to the plot. Searching the Sands directory, an Albert Cureton is listed at that address from 1916. Searching Trove we see Albert Glaze Cureton mentioned several times, from an early mention of him as clerk in the head office of the Central Silver Mining Company, to the death notice of his wife, Annie Alfreda in January 1951, which lists her as 'dearly beloved mother of Myee Alvarez and Gilbert Cureton and widow of Albert Glaze Cureton'. A rare treat, searching the State Library's catalogue for scenes of Sydney suburbs of the time delivered a result from photographs by Arthur Ernest Foster, which included this charming view of 'Bentham' from around the time when it was occupied by Albert Glaze Cureton and his family.



'This unique old home recently came up for sale in my area. I think it is heritage listed, could you tell me more about it?'

GLENN FROM BEVERLY HILLS
Re: 136 Stoney Creek Road, Beverly Hills, NSW 2209

The house has remained substantially intact since its construction, c 1901, likely by Robert Jonas, an English carpenter-joiner whose wife Lucy Jonas was the first registered owner of the property. The house is of locally notable style and detailing and is a rare surviving example of timber cottage construction from the turn of the 20th century. Searching for this property on the State Heritage Inventory shows it has been listed. Originally named Devonian Farm House, it has remained substantially intact since its construction.

Resource list

- **NSW Heritage Register:** heritage.nsw.gov.au/search-for-heritage/search-for-nsw-heritage/
- **Sands Postal Directory:** archives.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
- **Trove:** trove.nla.gov.au
- **Historical land records viewer (HLRV):** hlrv.nswlrs.com.au
- **Subdivision plans, NSW maps & architectural plans — search the Library's catalogue:** sl.nsw.gov.au

Speak to library staff for help with finding and using these resources, or attend one of our Lifelong Learners workshops.



Fish pie – original recipe, 1911

The Kookaburra Cookery Book

Put some boned fish in half-pint boiled milk with salt, pepper, 1 teaspoonful of anchovy sauce, and a few oysters.

Put on to warm 1 tablespoonful cornflour, mixed in milk to thicken it, and put it in when the milk boils.

When thick, pour into a pie dish and put around oysters or shrimps and cover with puff paste.

Fish pie

Modern version

Ingredients (serves 4)

600 g snapper fillets (skin off)
 300 g scallops (roe on)
 ½ pint milk = 250 ml (or 150 ml milk + 100 ml pouring cream)
 1 tablespoon cornflour (mixed with a little cold milk)
 1 egg, beaten
 1 pastry sheet from 375g pkt puff pastry (preferably all butter)

Anchovy sauce

(from Stephanie Alexander's *The Cook's Companion*)

1 clove garlic, finely chopped
 1–2 anchovy fillets, finely chopped
 pinch salt
 freshly ground black pepper
 2 teaspoon red-wine vinegar
 2 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Optional extras

dill, roughly chopped
 1½ leeks, finely sliced

Method

Sauté leeks in a butter until soft and layer into base of pie dish.

Whisk (or blend) ingredients for anchovy sauce and set aside.

Cut fish into 2 cm pieces and pat scallops dry on paper towel.

Layer fish and scallops over leeks and sprinkle with salt and pepper and chopped dill.

Heat milk (or milk/cream mixture) with anchovy sauce, adding cornflour when boiling. Stir/whisk until thick and allow to cool.

Spoon half of sauce over fish and scallops. Layer and repeat, adding salt and pepper and chopped dill as before.

Roll out pastry sheet on floured board. Cut 2 cm larger than outer rim of pie plate. Reserve trimmings.

Dampen rim of pie plate with water. Lift pastry over filling and seal – folding back edges to create decorative rope finish or crimp with fork.

Brush top of pie with beaten egg yolk.

Cut fish shapes from pastry scraps, add to top of pie and brush with beaten egg.

Place in hot oven (200°C/220°C non-fan) for 10/15 mins, then lower to moderate temperature (180°C/200°C non-fan) and bake for 10 mins until deep golden brown.

Let stand for 10 mins.

Cut crust into quarters, lift off pie and spoon filling onto warmed plates, place crust over filling. Serve with steamed green beans, carrots and/or oven-roasted tomatoes.

Notes from cook Margot Riley

Priced at half a crown, the *Kookaburra Cookery Book of Culinary and Household Recipes and Hints* was compiled in 1911 by the committee of the Lady Victoria Buxton Girls' Club in Adelaide, South Australia. Well-known women from around the country contributed recipes, and the book was deemed to be of great value to housewives.

This fish pie recipe was submitted by Edith Knox, wife of Edward Knox Jnr, chairman and managing director of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Ltd. The couple raised four daughters at Rona, a splendid 1880s sandstone mansion in the eastern Sydney suburb of Bellevue Hill.

After trying the original recipe, I decided to use a mixture of milk and cream to give bit more richness to the sauce. For more flavour, I added a bed of buttered leeks as a base for the first fish layer. I also sprinkled the fish with chopped dill for freshness.

I based the quantity of fish, scallops and pastry on modern recipes and the capacity of my four-cup fish pie dish but worked to the original recipe for the sauce. I wanted a good amount of firm-fleshed white fish, and as my partner is allergic to prawns and I don't like oysters, I used scallops instead.

No ingredients were listed for anchovy sauce, which was a commonly available condiment in the early 1900s and is still available today. As such a small quantity was required, I decided to make my own from a recipe in Stephanie Alexander's *The Cook's Companion*. I also chose not to double cook the fish – a common practice in nineteenth-century recipes for hygiene reasons that have been solved by modern refrigeration.

Vashti Hughes

Underground theatre and cabaret performer Vashti Hughes talks about her one-woman show *Dictionary by a Bitch: The Journals of Bee Miles*.

YOU'VE PERFORMED ON STAGES ACROSS SYDNEY FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, THEN YOUR INDUSTRY WENT QUIET WITH COVID-19. HOW DID YOU SPEND YOUR TIME?

I started going for really long walks. I live in Kings Cross and I would walk to Watsons Bay along the harbour shoreline, and into the inner-west. It was so beautiful, and I found it really relaxing. I saw our city with such different eyes — no traffic, no people, no urgent rushing.

DID THE PANDEMIC RAISE ANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU AS AN ARTIST?

Yes, after a while I feared that our world — including live performance — wouldn't come back. I had the depressing realisation that if we had no theatre, no live music and all the other ways communities gather, then our world would be bleak. Luckily, live performance seems to be thriving again, so fingers crossed it stays this way.

IS THERE A FAVOURITE CHARACTER YOU'VE INVENTED AND/OR PLAYED?

Mavis Brown, repressed secretary extraordinaire, from my show *Six Quick Chicks*. She's a heart-warming hilarious klutzy clown, who falls through the world in a state of absurd anxiety.

HOW DID YOU FIRST 'MEET' BEE MILES?

When I was at school, I heard about Bee Miles reciting Shakespeare in the street for money. I thought, that's entrepreneurial of her! And she must have known a lot of Shakespeare if people could request whatever they wanted to hear. I told my mum, who told me she sat next to Bee on a bus when Mum was a student. Bee wanted to bet with her about which car would overtake them first. Apparently, Bee played a lot of games like this with whoever she sat next to.

WHAT DID YOU DISCOVER WHILE RESEARCHING YOUR SHOW?

I read through all the material available in the Mitchell Library. She was an articulate writer, who shared personal insights into living on the fringes of society for a few decades from the 1920s. Bee's journals detail her time in psychiatric institutions, as well as her epic journeys around Australia. She even gave the journals glossaries.

I love the fact that she'd get into taxis and demand to be taken anywhere in the country she wanted to go — even Perth! If she was thrown out, her occasional revenge was to rip the car door off the hinges. She had extraordinary physical strength.

I discovered that Bee got into medicine at Sydney Uni in the early 1920s, which was really unusual for a woman at the time.

She train-hopped around the country, running alongside trains



when they slowed down at lights, and then hauling herself into them. She also played a lot of classical piano.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT *DICTIONARY BY A BITCH*?

It's based on information about Bee Miles' life that I found interesting when I read her journals. I took away things that exemplified her free spirit and would translate to live performance. Then I approached the director Liesel Badorrek, who's very resourceful, funny, a strong feminist and makes bold creative choices — perfect for Bee Miles!

Creative development was lined up at East Sydney Community Arts Centre in Darlinghurst as part of the *Flying Nun* series. But then Covid hit. So Bee went on the back-burner. Eventually, it was rescheduled and, after only a week of rehearsals, we did three shows in December 2020, with my partner Ross Johnston on sound design and visuals.

HOW DO YOU THINK ATTITUDES TO BEE AND HER LIFE STORY HAVE CHANGED OVER TIME AND HOW WE REMEMBER HER AS A SYDNEY 'ECCENTRIC'?

As time goes on we lose the first-hand experiences of those who encountered Bee in the streets of Sydney. So we're celebrating her life and bringing together old stories about her and looking forward to hearing ones we haven't even heard yet. We honour her as an eccentric of times past, but I wonder how her rule-breaking behaviour would be tolerated now.

Bee's life and notoriety inspired the naming of the BMiles Women's Foundation, a specialist homelessness service for women.

See *Dictionary by a Bitch* at the State Library of NSW on Thursdays at 7 pm and Saturdays at 2 pm & 7 pm (one hour) throughout June. \$25, \$20 (Friends/conc).

Supported by City of Sydney CBD Activation Grant

I love the fact that she'd get into taxis and demand to be taken anywhere in the country she wanted to go — even Perth! If she was thrown out, her occasional revenge was to rip the car door off the hinges.

Bligh and dry

The untrustworthiness of facts is a contemporary malaise. Truth gets lost — or, depending on your perspective, found — in a byzantine labyrinth of social media feeds. Indeed, the fragility of truth appears to be shaped by the slipperiness of the digital world. Words on paper, on the other hand, seem more reliable.

So it was an honour to see William Bligh's logbooks from 1789 inscribed on the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World register this year. Kept by Bligh on his open boat voyage to Batavia after the mutiny on the *Bounty*, these logbooks convey with compelling immediacy the extraordinary conditions under which they were written. Forged in adversity, surely they are exceptional records of truth.

Yet, the truth is somewhat less epic. Historians have always treated Bligh with caution, and over time an increasingly unflattering image of him has emerged. In his 2018 book *Mutiny, Mayhem, Mythology*, Alan Frost traces how Bligh mythologised his own history, starting



Depiction of the 'Mutiny on the Bounty', 1790, by Robert Dodd

with these logs. While he undoubtedly executed an amazing feat of seamanship, he also had a ferocious temper and an otherwise chaotic leadership style. Like many a modern-day politician, Bligh assiduously courted public opinion and carefully crafted his public persona.

Perhaps one truth that can be observed from the Library's collection is that public relations spin has always been part of human experience: all that's different are the technologies available to execute it.

Richard Neville



Conservator Dana Kahabka working on the Tasman Map, photo by Joy Lai

Uncharted waters

More than 12 months of conservation work has gone into preparing the Library's Tasman Map for its first public outing in 10 years. Conservator Dana Kahabka consulted international experts and developed an eco-friendly solvent to remove varnish without damaging the map. The 380-hour operation used 6000 cotton swabs, 2400 pieces of abaca tissue and three litres of the solvent. It's the first time anything like this has been attempted by the Library's conservation team. The work revealed previously obscured details and subtle markings on the seventeenth-century manuscript map. It's believed that Prince Roland Bonaparte, the great-nephew of Napoleon I, had the map varnished and framed after buying it at auction in 1891, and it was in that condition that it arrived at the Library in 1933. You can see the results of the conservation work in our *Maps of the Pacific* exhibition from 10 July 2021.



Love and war

Idris ‘Charlie’ Pike was 19 when he enlisted in the 17th Battalion of the AIF in March 1915. He left his Leichhardt home, his work as a cabinetmaker and his sweetheart, Violet Clapson (pictured), and sailed for Egypt, then on to Gallipoli. Throughout his service, he wrote some 160 letters to Violet. She kept them all, as well as postcards, photographs, pamphlets and a silk embroidered souvenir Charlie sent from Egypt with a personalised message worked into the fabric. This collection was recently donated to the Library by Charlie’s grandson Idris (his grandfather’s namesake).



Portrait podcast

From one of Sydney’s earliest ‘selfies’ to the celebrity portrait that caused an unwitting hero to be chased down the city’s streets, fascinating stories are covered in the new podcast *Portrait Detective*. Over six episodes, fashion historian Margot Riley and history writer Cassie Gilmartin pore over some of the best-known portraits in the Library’s collection. Listen now via your podcast platform or find it online.

portraitdetective.com.au/podcast

Self-portrait of Mary Ellen Betts, 1837



With a little help from my friends

Unemployed and unable to survive without alcohol, Paul Greguric thought he was at the end of the road. Sleeping each night at Sydney’s Matthew Talbot Hostel, Paul spent hours every day sitting at the Library to escape the chaos and clutter, all while forging friendships that would become invaluable. His first book, *The Man Behind the Prize: A Life of JF Archibald*, has just been released. Bringing to life the story of the man responsible for Australia’s best-known and most prestigious portrait prize also saved his own.

A version of this story first appeared in *The Catholic Weekly*

Photo by Alphonsus Fok

Award winners

To be announced this winter:

Russell Prize for Humour Writing
— 17 June

Miles Franklin Literary Award — 15 July
Children’s Book Council of
Australia Awards — 20 August

National Biography Award — August





We're giving one lucky new subscriber to *Openbook* the chance to win an evening in the State Library's stunning Shakespeare Room for their book club.

This beautiful room in the historic Mitchell Building is one of Sydney's hidden gems. With its Tudor-style architecture and Shakespeare-inspired stained glass windows, it's the perfect setting to discuss your favourite books with five of your friends. The prize includes drinks and nibbles, as well as a private viewing of Australia's only copy of Shakespeare's First Folio from 1623.

To be in the running to win, simply subscribe to *Openbook* or become a Friend of the Library by 13 August 2021.

See website for terms & conditions.

Subscribe/Give as a gift

Your subscription will commence with the current issue. 12 months/4 issues \$40 (includes postage in Australia) sl.nsw.gov.au/openbook

Library Friends receive *Openbook* for free as part of their member benefits. sl.nsw.gov.au/join/become-friend

Quiz answers page 79: 1. b) read 2. Pink 3. The Sydney Harbour Bridge 4. Mark Twain 5. *Seven Little Australians* 6. Bangarra 7. b) Liverpool, England 8. true 9. c) Saint Catherine of Alexandria 10. c) Skyhooks 11. shorts 12. b) Shaun Tan 13. b) his mother 14. c) Push 15. Australian Census 16. b) an abattoir in Roma 17. Antarctica 18. Joan 19. b) 1836 20. reason

Events

17
JUN**Scholar Talks @ Six**

Join curator Maggie Patton for our series on maps. Held in the Library's beautiful new Map Rooms, each event includes a private viewing of collection items, with light refreshments. Upcoming speakers: Ian Hoskins (15 July) and Richard de Grijjs (18 August).

24 JUN

The B List book club

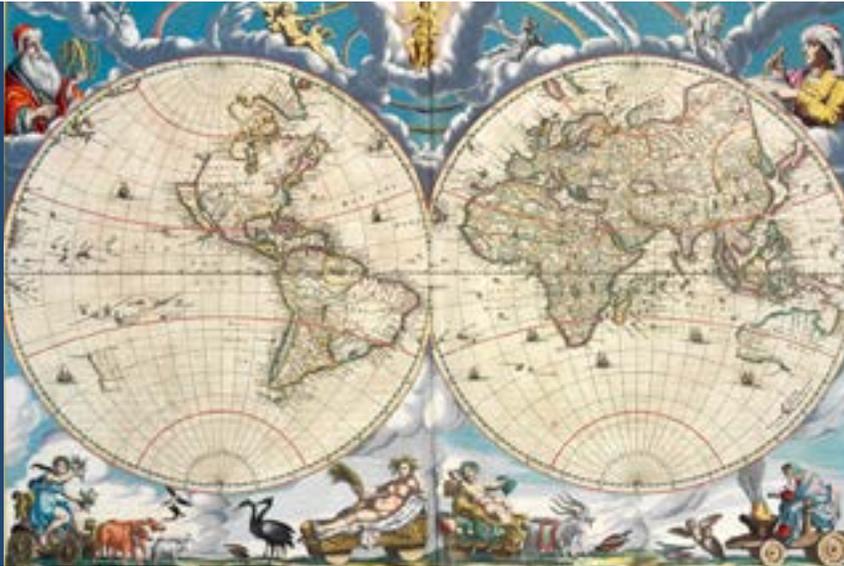
Award-winning author and B List host Bri Lee will talk about her latest book, *Who Gets to Be Smart*. \$15 onsite, free online

11 JUL **Curator tours**

Discover hidden spaces that house all sorts of fascinating items, with stories to match, in our behind-the-scenes tours. Fortnightly on Thursdays at 5.30 pm, tours on 22 July, 5 and 19 August, bookings required



Exhibitions

10
JUL**Maps of the Pacific, 1500-1860**

Explore the beauty, art and science of mapping across three centuries through a large selection of maps, charts, atlases and globes of the Pacific, held in the Library's maps collection – one of the most significant in Australia. Free, until 31 October 2021

Nova et Accuratissima Totius Terrarum Orbis Tabula ... 1667, by Joan Blaeu

Elsewhere

Moree

Minyima Tjuta – Many Women at Yaama Ganu Gallery in Moree shows a selection of work by established and emerging female painters of Tjala Arts, an Aboriginal owned and run corporation in South Australia on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, until mid-July. yaamaganu.com.au

Casula

See paintings from Ken Done's private collection in the exhibition *Paintings You Probably Haven't Seen* at Casula Powerhouse in Liverpool, 24 July to 3 October. casulapowerhouse.com





19 AUG Inaugural Poetry Month

Join us for a special night of poetry and spoken word showcasing some of NSW's best-known and exciting writers. Co-presented by Red Room Poetry and the State Library.

AUG

Family History Month

Family history is part detective work, part historical research. Your sleuthing can unearth surprising and sometimes moving lost stories, which may enhance your understanding of who you are and where you came from. In August the Library is hosting a series of webinars to help get you started.
sl.nsw.gov.au/familyhistorymonth



This month



How's Tricks?

Spectacular illusions, bamboozling tricks, and death-defying escapes – step behind the velvet curtain and be prepared to be amazed when Australia's history with magic is revealed. Free exhibition, from 26 June 2021

Dyarubbin

Darug knowledge-holders, artists and educators Leanne Watson, Jasmine Seymour, Erin Wilkins and Rhiannon Wright share their stories of Dyarubbin (the Hawkesbury River), a beautiful and haunting place. Free exhibition, until 13 March 2022

Wowawme rock shelf, Dyarubbin, photo by Joy Lai

Don't miss

19 AUG

World Photography Day

From Australia's first photograph, to iconic shots by the likes of Sam Hood, Olive Cotton and William Yang, to stunning 21st

century digital images, the Library's photography collection is diverse and significant. Many images can be purchased as fine art prints. To celebrate World Photography Day on 19 August, the Library Shop is offering a 20% discount on all prints ordered online in August. Just mention *Openbook*.
printshop.sl.nsw.gov.au/archival-prints/

Americans and Australians at Townsville, 1944, photo by N Herfort



Save the date



Give way to your harmless
natural impulses and emotions.
Live toughly, dangerously, excitedly,
exhilaratingly and simply.

Bee Miles, 'One Formulae for Happiness, no. 13',
A Dictionary by a Bitch, c 1930s

