SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

The power of art to evoke memories of the absent is highlighted in the poignant imagery of Anne Ferran in SHADOW LAND, a survey exhibition featuring works particularly employing photo-media, spanning 30 years that is currently on display at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery. Ferran’s unique manner of investigating lost histories including those of incarcerated women and children from colonial times, unidentified female inmates of a mental hospital and abandoned industrial landscapes has provided a touchstone for this Symposium on memory. Scholars from the disciplines of History and Archaeology will consider how the materiality of places, landscapes, remains and objects both reflect and shape practices that produce identity and memory.

1.00 - 1.10 PM       WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

FIRST SESSION   Chair: Alistair Paterson

1.10 - 1.40 PM   Key Note Address: Jane Lydon
                     Half-lives: Photography, history, memorialisation

1.40 - 2.10 PM   Tracy Ireland
                     Photography, archaeology and the education of desire

2.10 - 2.40 PM   Sandra Bowdler
                     Photographs of Tasmanian Aborigines at Oyster Cove c.1858

2.40 - 3.10 PM   BREAK

SECOND SESSION   Chair: Jane Lydon

3.10 - 3.40 PM   Jessica Neath
                     Photographs and memorials of absence

3.40 - 4.10 PM   Alistair Paterson
                     Art and Contemporary Archaeology: 2014AD

4.10 - 4.40 PM   Alison Atkinson-Philips
                     Difficult Knowledge in the Landscape: What difference does art make?

4.40 - 5.00 PM   Closing remarks and open discussion

5.00 PM       DRINKS

We would like to thank our Campus Partners History and Archaeology
society. The moving and insistent ‘half-lives’ of the past are not merely traces of the past, but an embodied engagement with it. Ferran evokes are not merely traces of the past, but points of contact and reflection on the present. As she turns object into image into object, she recuperates and reinscribes a concern with history and identity in place, restorations and ruins. Ferran’s photography refuses seduction by the nostalgia and the desire to fill historical voids with representations and narratives, as we often see demanded by the commodification of heritage and its grounding of identity in place, restorations and ruins. Ferran’s photography suggests how the desire to know the past through forms of materiality and documentation, memory and historicity, have become so culturally embedded that they can appear natural and not cultural at all. Ferran evokes are not merely traces of the past, but points of contact and reflection on the present. As she turns object into image into object, she recuperates and reinscribes a concern with history and identity in place, restorations and ruins. Ferran’s photography refuses seduction by the nostalgia and the desire to fill historical voids with representations and narratives, as we often see demanded by the commodification of heritage and its grounding of identity in place, restorations and ruins. Ferran’s photography suggests how the desire to know the past through forms of materiality and documentation, memory and historicity, have become so culturally embedded that they can appear natural and not cultural at all.
need for new ways to remember troubled pasts. Emerging memorial languages indicate the underpinning traditional monuments. These use of absence and recent public memorial artwork. Positioning an empty landscape as becomes a resounding emptiness that fills the landscape photographs. Transformed by the artist’s photographic treatment this lack becomes a resounding emptiness that fills the artwork. Positioning an empty landscape as memorial sits in stark contrast to the tradition of making landscapes remember with the addition of upright, permanent monuments. There is a correlation between Ferran’s use of absence and recent public memorial projects, which also reject the logic of presence underpinning traditional monuments. These emerging memorial languages indicate the need for new ways to remember troubled pasts.

Photographs and memorials of absence Anne Ferran uses photography in unexpected ways to document archaeological and architectural remains and reveal neglected aspects of Australia’s colonial past. The artist pays particular attention to the gaps and silences that punctuate the historical record and works with these absences to give them material form. The artwork Lost to Worlds (2008), made at the heritage site of a convict female factory in Tasmania, pictures the lack of visible historical markers in a series of landscapes photographs. Transformed by the artist’s photographic treatment this lack becomes a resounding emptiness that fills the artwork. Positioning an empty landscape as memorial sits in stark contrast to the tradition of making landscapes remember with the addition of upright, permanent monuments. There is a correlation between Ferran’s use of absence and recent public memorial projects, which also reject the logic of presence underpinning traditional monuments. These emerging memorial languages indicate the need for new ways to remember troubled pasts.

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