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# SLAMmag

SLAMmag is the electronic magazine of the School of Literature, Art & Media (SLAM) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, providing updates on the activities of the School and celebrating our research and teaching achievements.

#### In this issue:

- Head of School welcome
- School news and events
- Department news and events

# Head of School welcome

Welcome to the autumn edition of SLAMmag. It has been an incredibly busy first semester, as new units have been locked in to the unit approval system and both teaching and admin staff have grappled with the potential opened up by the transformed curriculum. With fingers and toes crossed, I'll hazard that we're approaching readiness to teach the new first year curriculum in 2018, and are now beginning to engage with interdisciplinary and BA advanced project units.

Nick Enfield, the (SLAM based) inaugural Director of the Sydney Social Sciences and Humanities Advanced Research Centre (SSSHARC) held two well-attended 'meet the Director' sessions in early May, at which he outlined a number of exciting interim research initiatives for the Faculty, including 'pop-up' research centres and an 'ultimate peer review' programme. The new FASS and renovated R.D. Watt building on Science Road, which will eventually house SSSHARC, is coming along on schedule (more toe crossing in order) and due for completion mid 2018.

Perhaps the most exciting change from the School perspective has been the announcement, with the

release of the [Final Change Plan](#) on 29 May, that the SCA will be joining the School as a department as of 1 July. Though the relationship will be more virtual than physical in the first year, given that SCA staff and teaching will remain at Rozelle until the beginning of 2019, a range of curricular and research synergies make SLAM the obvious home for SCA. I hope we can begin to take advantage of these as we welcome new colleagues into the School. We can look forward to an SCA report in future issues of SLAMmag.

Although it technically fell outside the period covered by this autumn issue, I want to mention here the departure of SLAM's beloved senior administrator Eileen Corrigan on 22 June. Due to a family emergency, Eileen left for Ireland just before her planned farewell party, so we look forward to sending her off properly when she visits Sydney in September. She is already very much missed. With the mid-year break approaching many academic staff members are also heading off to present papers or explore archives overseas, while some admin staff take well-deserved leave. Wishing you safe travels and a productive break.



Professor [Vanessa Smith](#)

## 2017 Graduations

On the morning of 5 May, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Art History, English, Linguistics, Studies in Religion and Theatre and Performance were conferred in the Great Hall. Candidates were fortunate to receive their degrees in the presence of Naomi Mayer AOM, who, as well as an illustrious leader in Australian Health, is known to many as the lead singer of The Sapphires. Vanessa Smith was acting Dean at the ceremony.

In the afternoon it was the turn of Media and Communications students to receive their degrees, with the occasional address delivered by Anne Summers AO.

Following the ceremony, SLAM hosted an afternoon tea for Dr Summers and friends in the Woolley Common Room.



L-R : Naomi Mayer, Peter Fitzsimons and Vanessa Smith



L-R : Laura Ginters, Fiona Martin, Anne Summers. Vanessa Smith and Alana Mann

# news

## SLAM Prizes and Awards Ceremony 2017

Words by Robert Crompton,  
School Communications Officer

On 27 April, SLAM's Head of School, Professor Vanessa Smith, hosted the annual School of Literature, Art and Media Prizes and Awards Ceremony in the Holme Refectory. This opportunity to celebrate the achievements of SLAM students is one of the biggest events on the SLAM calendar, and this year's ceremony was no exception, with over 225 guests, donors and academic staff in attendance to honour 71 prize, award and fellowship winners.

Professor Smith opened the ceremony and the Department Chairs and Program Directors presented the prizes for Australian Literature, English, Art History, Celtic Studies, Studies in Religion and Media and Communications.

At the end of the ceremony, Professor Smith congratulated the winners and thanked the donors who made the prizes, awards and fellowships possible. She gave particular thanks to the benefactors and their representatives who attended this year's event:

### Australian Literature:

- Alister Wong – Maxwell E. Arthur Prize for Australian Literature

### English:

- Jeanette Knox and Christine Jennett – Australian Federation of Graduate Women (NSW) Prize
- Ben Warburton – Elizabeth Warburton Prize
- Tony Williams and Jude Hore – John Bell and Joyce Williams Prize in Shakespeare Studies
- David DeMontfort – Richard Madelaine Prize in English Literature

### Celtic Studies:

- Rosemary Samios with Jacci Samios and Jamie Samios – Rosemary Samios Awards in Scottish-Gaelic Studies

### Media and Communications:

- Peter Dunn – Anne Dunn Memorial Prize
- Paul Nangle, Director of Complaints, APC – Australia Press Council Prize
- Amna Karra-Hassan, Board member of the Council for Australia-Arab Relations – Media and Communications Fellowships

### Art History:

- John and Helen Carter – Kathryn Carter Prize
- Jacqui Strecker, Jennifer Turpin and Amanda Rowell – Francis McDonald Scholarship

### Linguistics:

- Alan de Zwaan, Joy Howard and Jesse Walker from Appen – The Appen Prize for Excellence in Linguistics

Thank you to the SLAM administration team and the Chairs of Department for their work in putting the event together, and especially to Georgia Holmes and Eileen Corrigan for organising the excellent catering for the after party, where the celebration continued long after the ceremony ended.

# news

## SLAM Prizes and Awards Ceremony 2017



Professor Robert Dixon and Toby Fitch



Professor Peter Marks and Bavani Moodley



Professor Jonathan Wooding and Martin Wright



Professor Nick Enfield and Aurelie Mallet

# news

## SLAM Prizes and Awards Ceremony 2017



Associate Professor Jay Johnston and Adam Smith



L-R: Professor Mark Ledbury, Damien Choy and Stephanie Swanson



L-R: Dr Alana Mann, Amna Karra-Hassan and Alison Xiao

# news

## SLAM Prizes and Awards Ceremony 2017



# news

## SLAM New Faces



[Donna West Brett](#)

After three years of teaching at the University I am thrilled to be appointed as the Early Career Development Fellow in Art History focusing on postwar photography and teaching into the curatorial program. I came to the University after many years at the Art Gallery of NSW and I am really looking forward to planning a program of teaching and research that will bring together my art museum experience and photography research.

In 2016 I published my first book with Routledge titled *Photography and Place: Seeing and Not Seeing Germany After 1945* and I have recently commenced research on a new project that features photography from the Stasi Archive and Cold War Germany. I am also a Research Leader of the Photographic Cultures Research Group and interested to hear from colleagues with a photography research focus.

While I don't have much free time, you will often find me with my artist partner at exhibition openings or pottering in the garden.

*Photo: Tom Loveday*



[Yaegan Doran](#)

I'm delighted to be joining the Department of Linguistics as a Lecturer for the next twelve months, in addition to my position as Research Fellow in the LCT Centre for Knowledge-Building in SSPS. My research focuses on the interaction of language and broader semiosis and its implications for our understanding of knowledge and education.

A book of mine exploring the knowledge and discourse of physics is due out in September. In addition, with Professor Karl Maton in SSPS I have been developing tools for the analysis of the context dependence and density of meanings in language and images, and with Professor James Martin exploring the ways in which our values systems organise the way we speak and write.

In my 'free' time, I am an Assistant Coach of the Australian Women's Volleyball Team and am heavily involved in the University's and the state's senior programs.



[Heather Horst](#)

I am a newly appointed Professor in MECO. My current research focuses upon how digital media, technology and other forms of material culture mediate relationships, communication, learning, migration and mobility. A socio-anthropologist by training, I am currently finishing out ethnographic research on the history and changing landscape of mobile telecommunications in Fiji and PNG, the use of location technologies by families in Melbourne, Shanghai and Tokyo and the use of technology for forms of informal learning. I am also starting new fieldwork this year in PNG exploring the use of mobile phones to circulate protest music.

Before coming to Sydney, I was a Professor of Media and Communications and Director, Research Partnerships at RMIT University in Melbourne where I co-founded the Digital Ethnography Research Centre.

When not in Fiji or PNG, much of my free time is spent with my family and recently adopted cat exploring our new home town of Balmain.

# news

## SLAM New Faces



[Anna Lawrenson](#)

I have been a part of the University's Museum Studies, and now Museum and Heritage Studies, programs since 2010. I'm delighted to be taking up the continuing Scholarly Teaching Fellowship role this year.

My background is in art history and I initially taught in this field while I completed my PhD. After that I worked in the arts sector in management, curatorial and research positions before joining USYD to manage the Hong Kong Museum Studies teaching program.

I am currently working on a book, with Dr Chiara O'Reilly, on blockbuster exhibitions in Australia, to be published by Routledge. This means that in my spare time I drag my family to exhibitions around town.



**Ashley Maher**

For the next three and a half years, I will be a Lecturer in the Department of English. I'm originally from the United States but have spent the last three years as a Junior Research Fellow at University College, Oxford.

My current book project establishes the centrality of modernist buildings and architectural periodicals to twentieth-century British literature. In my next project, I will explore how animal habitat conservation, wildlife refuges, and zoos shaped the way British authors thought about community structure, with important consequences for their understanding of political and literary forms.

In my free time, I love to cook and travel with my husband, David. I very much look forward to checking out Sydney's famous coffeehouses.

# Department of Art History

Words by Professor [Mark Ledbury](#) | Chair of Department

We're delighted, first, to announce that [Donna West Brett](#) is officially joining the Department of Art History on a continuing basis as an Early Career Development Fellow - we congratulate Donna, on this and on receiving the [Ernst and Rosemarie Keller Award](#) from the Australian Academy of the Humanities, for her project "Photography and Surveillance in Divided Germany".

We also congratulate [Jennifer Milam](#) on her new role as Head of the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. Jennifer's outstanding record of teaching, scholarship and leadership during her 20 years at the University of Sydney will mean she is much missed in the Department, School and Faculty and we all wish her the very best in her new role.

In July of this year, [Mark Ledbury](#) steps down as Chair of Department after six years in the role. [Catriona Moore](#) will be taking over as Chair, and her long experience with the Department and her expertise and relations with our colleagues at SCA will be invaluable to the Department as the School welcomes SCA to Campus over the coming years and as the new curriculum beds down.

We are delighted to announce, too that Mark Ledbury and [Stephen Whiteman](#), together with Professor Adrian Vickers of the Department of Asian Studies, have been awarded a Getty Foundation "Connecting Art Histories" grant of A\$320,000 for the project "Site and Space in South East Asia", which will develop the growing network of scholars and researchers that was instigated by the first of these grants three years ago.

As we prepare for the first running of our senior Fieldwork module in Paris during Winter Study 2017, we're pleased to report further progress with our new Departmental emphasis on bringing students closer to objects and sites and delivering more hours outside the lecture room and in the wider community. [Mark de Vitis](#), together with his excellent tutorial team in our Introductory unit, ARHT 1001, held a week of innovative tutorial interactions at the Art Gallery of New South Wales for all students, and Mark has also developed a new second year unit, to be taught entirely at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, for second year students in 2018. Alongside the Department's Educational Innovation Grant focused on Problem-based and Object-based learning, these new teaching innovations not only respond to the University's new strategic priorities for student outcomes but also offer exciting new opportunities to art history students.

We are also delighted to announce the first winner of our new scholarship for fieldwork students – Imogen King is the first recipient of the Frank McDonald Scholarship in Art History, and her prize was awarded at SLAM's Prizes Night by Jacqui Strecker, Jennifer Turpin and Amanda Rowell, all prominent art world figures and Power alumnae. We congratulate Imogen and all our other prize winners this year.

Congratulations, too, to Honorary Associate, alumna and tutor, Dr Kate Davidson, on the publication in March of her book, *Photography, Natural History and the Nineteenth-Century Museum*.

The Power Institute has been busy, too. We've hosted lectures and seminars in our Sydney Asian Art Series with Professor Joan Key of the University of Michigan, and Professor Julia Bryan Wilson in our Keir Foundation series. We also launched *Hegel's Owl* in London at a very successful event at [King's College](#), and *Stray* in Melbourne at the Ian Potter Museum.

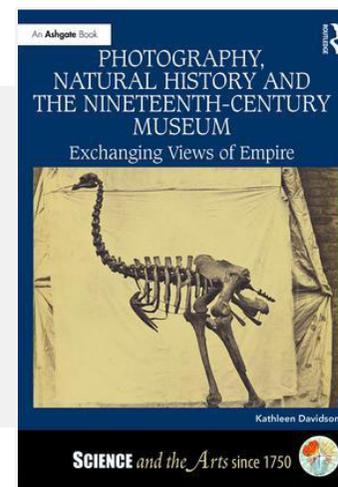
We hosted Power alumnus and Pulitzer Prize-winning author and journalist, Sebastian Smee, on 6 June, and [interviewed him](#). Sebastian is spending a year's sabbatical back in Sydney, with his wife, a musician, and their children, and we're delighted to welcome him back to campus.



L-R : Mark Ledbury, Amanda Rowell, Jennifer Turpin, Imogen King and Jacqui Strecker, at SLAM's Prizes Night

## Recent publications

Kathleen Davidson. [Photography, Natural History and the Nineteenth-Century Museum: Exchanging Views of Empire](#). (2017, Routledge).



# Celtic Studies

Words by Professor [Jonathan Wooding](#) | Sir Warwick Fairfax Chair of Celtic Studies

The annual prizes night was an opportunity to celebrate the first recipients of the new awards for study of Scottish Gaelic and the very generous gift of Mrs Rosemary Samios that made these possible. Mrs Samios made the first award in person to Cameron Wadick to support his semester of study at Glasgow University. Madeleine Snook (who was away on exchange to Edinburgh on the night) also received an award. These awards enable two outstanding students from Celtic Studies to further develop their interests in Gaelic with periods of study in Scotland. We hope many more will soon follow in their path.

The Aisling Society prize for best essay in Irish or Irish-Australian history deservedly went to Celtic Studies student, Anna Usmar, for an essay on the art of the Book of Kells. Other prize-winners included Declan Michell (Scottish Society and Burns Club Prize), Lauren Churchill (Hadyn Lloyd-Davies Prize for Welsh) and Martin Wright (Betty Eva Naish Prize).

Following our very successful conference in 2016, a refereed volume of essays is in preparation, entitled *Memory and Foresight in the Celtic World* and edited by Dr Lorna Barrow and Professor [Jonathan Wooding](#), which is to appear in Sydney Series in Celtic Studies early in 2018.



Mrs Rosemary Samios, Cameron Wadick and Professor Jonathan Wooding.  
Image courtesy Neil Hinds.

We also note that the very learned collection *St Samson of Dol and the earliest History of Brittany, Cornwall and Wales* (2017, Woodbridge: Boydell), edited by Dr Lynette Olson, will be launched at the Leeds International Medieval Congress in July, where most of the contributors will be attending.

In other research news Professor Jonathan Wooding has been studying the gravestone (pictured below) of his great-great grandparents, in the NSW town of Kempsey, which includes a very unusual example of an Irish-Language inscription, in the Ulster dialect, commemorating Protestant migrants who spoke Irish. Dr [Pamela O'Neill](#) is off to Scotland in July to walk the putative route, from Dunkeld to Iona, of the AD 717 expulsion of the Iona monks by King Nechtan. Good to see some healthy outdoor research going on!

2017 unfortunately sees Dr Katherine Spadaro leave us to move to Brisbane. Katherine taught Scottish Gaelic for three years on our programme (extending a remarkable family tradition, as both her father and mother had done so before her). Her former students and colleagues wish her the very best for her future endeavours.



Image courtesy Jonathan Wooding

# Department of English

Words by Professor [Peter Marks](#) | Chair of Department

Several members of staff have had books launched this semester. [Isabelle Hesse](#)'s first book, *The Politics of Jewishness in Contemporary World Literature: The Holocaust, Zionism and Colonialism* was published by Bloomsbury as part of its New Horizons In Contemporary Writing series. It is based on her PhD dissertation, carried out at the University of York. The book considers a wide range of novels from post-war Germany and France to Israeli, Palestinian, and postcolonial writers, and asks how these writers have engaged with topics such as the Holocaust, Israeli-Palestinian relations, and Jewish diaspora experience.

[Sarah Gleeson-White](#)'s *William Faulkner At Twentieth Century Fox: The Annotated Screenplays* was published by Oxford University Press. This book presents for the first time and in one volume the five screenplays Faulkner wrote while on contract to Twentieth Century Fox in the mid-1930s and the sixth he wrote in 1952. Sarah provides an informative introduction to Faulkner's screenwriting practices, and contextualises these within the broader genealogy of Hollywood screenwriting and all within one of the most important moments in the history of American cinema. The book has been described by Robert W. Hamblin, a leading Faulkner scholar, as 'a significant addition to Faulkner studies'.

[Jan Shaw](#)'s *Space, Gender, and Memory in Middle English Romance* was published by Palgrave in the New Middle Ages series, which has an emphasis on recuperating women's history and on feminist

and gender analysis. Jan's book considers the legendary figure of Melusine in relation to a range of Middle English traditions, including love and marriage, the spatial practices of women, the operation of individual and collective memory, and the legacies of patrimony. The University of Southern Queensland's Professor Peter Goodall commented that 'this study will transform our understanding of both the text and the potential of feminine subjectivity in the Middle Ages'. Jan is extending her research into the realm of leadership and women in the Middle Ages.

Alex Howard's *Charles Henri Ford: Between Modernism and Post-Modernism* was published recently as part of Bloomsbury's *Historicising Modernism* series. The first American surrealist poet, a prolific literary editor and a seminal influence on the New York School of poetry, Ford was a key figure in the transition from late modernist to post-modern culture in America. Alex's book is the first full-length scholarly study of this important, if hitherto neglected, literary figure, and, among other things, explores Ford's correspondence with the likes of Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and William Carlos Williams.

Andy Carruthers and Amelia Dale, who completed their PhDs in the Department several years ago, have been awarded renewable contracts at SUIBE (Shanghai University of International Business and Economics). Amelia will be a lecturer in British literature, and Andy will be a lecturer in North American and Australian literature.

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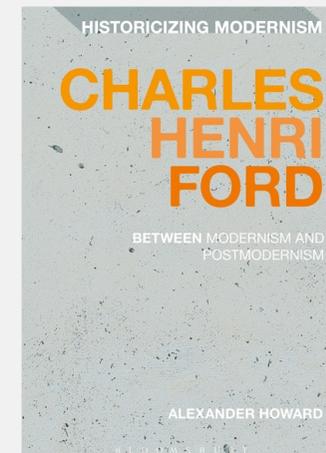
## Fiona McFarlane wins Dylan Thomas Prize

[Fiona McFarlane](#) has won the Dylan Thomas Prize for her short story collection, *The High Places*. This prestigious international prize is awarded to a writer 39 years old (the age Dylan Thomas was when he died) or younger, and rewards what the judges deem the best work of English-language literary fiction — poetry, drama or prose. The award was [presented](#) to Fiona in Swansea, Dylan Thomas's home town. A [Guardian report](#) noted that the 13 stories in the collection flit 'across continents, eras, and genres, examining the spectrum of emotional life with moments of uneasy anticipation, domestic contentment and ominous desperation'. The Chair of the judges, Professor Dai Smith, from Swansea University, said there were 'echoes of Thomas's work' in Fiona's range. He added that 'we were all impressed by, bluntly, a genius'. Enough said.

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### Recent publications

Alexander Howard. [Charles Henri Ford: Between Modernism and Postmodernism](#). (2017, Bloomsbury).



# Department of Linguistics

Words by Professor [Nick Enfield](#) | Chair of Department

[Monika Bednarek](#) has been named a general editor for the international journal *Functions of Language* (John Benjamins). *Functions of Language* is an international journal of linguistics which explores the functionalist perspective on the organisation and use of natural language. It publishes articles and reviews books from the full spectrum of functionalist linguistics, seeking to bring out the fundamental unity behind the various schools of thought, while stimulating discussion among functionalists. The overall purpose is to contribute to our understanding of how the use of languages in speech and writing has impacted, and continues to impact, upon the structure of those languages.

In April, Monika participated in the Language Attitudes and Popular Linguistics panel at the 2017 annual conference of the Popular Cultural Association and American Culture Association (PCACA) in San Diego, with a talk on 'The use of *ain't* in contemporary US television narratives'. In May, she gave an invited talk at the Department of Linguistics at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she was a visiting scholar. Her chapter on 'The role of dialogue in fiction' was recently published in *Pragmatics of Fiction: Approaches, Trends and Development* (eds Andreas H. Jucker and Miriam A. Locher, De Gruyter).

[Gwen Hyslop](#) published a profile of the Kurtöp language in the just-released second edition of Thurgood and La Polla's *Sino-Tibetan*

*Languages handbook* (Hyslop, Gwendolyn. 2017. Kurtöp. In eds. G. Thurgood and R. LaPolla *The Sino-Tibetan Languages*, 404-417. Routledge).

[Ahmar Mahboob](#) gave an invited talk at the TESOL Convention in Seattle in March, and a plenary address at the TESOL Arabia Conference in April. In May, he gave talks at the TESOL Forum and the South Asia Study Group (SASG), both at the University of Sydney.

Over the Easter Break, [Jim Martin](#) gave a four-day series of lectures on discourse semantics to research students at the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences in Hanoi, an opening address to a one day seminar on Applications of Systemic Functional Linguistics in Education, and a plenary address on functional language typology to the International Conference on Modern Linguistic Trends and Linguistic Studies in Vietnam, hosted by the Institute of Linguistics of the Academy.

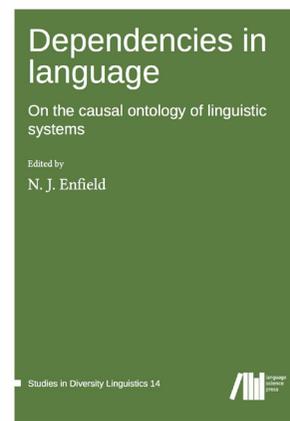
Earlier in the year, [Nick Riemer](#) (Department of English) gave a series of four two-hour lectures on the "Épistémologie de la linguistique comparée" as a visitor at the 'Empirical Foundations of Linguistics' laboratory at Université Paris-Diderot in Paris. This was a result of his being awarded a visiting international professorship position as part of their annual international fellowship scheme.

[Nick Enfield](#)'s edited book *Dependencies in Language: On the Causal Ontology of Linguistic Systems* was published in Berlin by Language Science Press. Here is the product description:

*Dependency is a fundamental concept in the analysis of linguistic systems. The many if-then statements offered in typology and grammar-writing imply a casually real notion of dependency that is central to the claim being made—usually with reference to widely varying timescales and types of processes. But despite the importance of the concept of dependency in our work, its nature is seldom defined or made explicit. This book brings together experts on language, representing descriptive linguistics, language typology, functional/cognitive linguistics, cognitive science, research on gesture and other semiotic systems, developmental psychology, psycholinguistics, and linguistic anthropology to address the following question: What kinds of dependencies exist among language-related systems, and how do we define and explain them in natural, causal terms?*

## Recent publications

Nick Enfield. [Dependencies in Language: On the Causal Ontology of Linguistic Systems](#). (2017, Language Science Press).



Nick was a panelist on the first of the Faculty's new series of public events titled "[Outside the Square](#)", on the question "Is Truth Dead?" on 4 May, at the Old Rum Store in Chippendale.

Nick has been coordinating activities of the [Post Truth Initiative](#), a Sydney Research Excellence Initiative (SREI 2020), which has been in full swing since March.

Nick has published two articles recently on the post-truth phenomenon, one in the [New Internationalist](#), the other as the inaugural article in a dedicated series being published this year in [The Conversation](#).

Nick appeared on stage at the Sydney Writers Festival in May, as a facilitator on two panels: "Why your wrong to care about grammar" and "What is lost when a language dies?"



Nick Enfield at the Outside the Square event. Image courtesy Sharon Hickey.

# Department of Media & Communications

Words by Dr [Alana Mann](#) | Chair of Department

## MECO student shortlisted for Jacoby-Walkley Scholarship

MECO is delighted to announce that student Lydia Bilton has been shortlisted for the prestigious [Jacoby-Walkley Scholarship](#).

Final-year journalism students and recent graduates with a passion for broadcast journalism were encouraged to apply for the 12-week paid internship. The recipient will spend eight weeks at the Nine Network in Sydney and four weeks at The Walkley Foundation for Journalism, and participate in one TV production course through the open program at the Australian Film TV & Radio School (AFTRS).

The winner will be announced at the Walkley Mid-Year Celebration on 26 July, in Sydney. We wish Lydia success in achieving this great opportunity to learn from some of Australia's leading news and current affairs journalists and producers.

## Homelessness and digital communication research

In April, Dr [Justine Humphry](#) presented at the *Public library services for people who are homeless* event, hosted by Ellen Forsyth, Public Library Services, Public Libraries and Engagement Division of the State Library of NSW. Justine delivered a presentation on her research on *Youth*

*homelessness and digital communication: the role of libraries to librarians* from all over NSW including Tamworth, Casino and Lismore. The presentation was very well received, generating a lot of interest and discussion during the day.

## MECO students showcase their social media skills

On 10 May, the postgraduate students of MECO6936 Social Media Communication showcased their work at the Conservatorium of Music (the Con).

This semester, the Con became the 'client' for the students, and asked them to provide a social media solution to increase the audience attendance for the Lunch Time Concerts and the Greenway Series. The students pitched, designed and implemented some outstanding ideas!

From pop up concerts on Eastern Avenue, to branded coffee cups and guerrilla hashtags in the city, geolocated Snapchats, and even the chance to hook up with the Con via Tinder, the students produced some highly creative works.

Congratulations to those students chosen to showcase their work, and thanks to all who were involved.

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# Centre for Medieval & Early Modern Studies

Words by Professor [Jonathan Wooding](#) | Acting Director, Centre for Medieval & Early Modern Studies

On 4 April, Associate Professor [Dan Anlezark](#) launched *Empress Adelheid and Countess Matilda: Medieval Female Rulership and the Foundations of European Society*, by Honorary Associate Penelope Nash. Dr Lynette Olson opened proceedings and gave a speech about the times in which the two women lived (the last half of the tenth century, and the last half of the eleventh/early twelfth centuries). Thanks go especially to Eileen Corrigan for helping to organise this event, and to all those who attended.

The May graduations featured two PhDs from the Centre: Matthew Larnach for a dissertation on 'The *Via Militaris*: A Roman Road between East and West in the Middle Ages' and Keagan Brewer for a dissertation on 'Wonder and Skepticism in the Middle Ages'. Matthew's research included walking the route of the road through a number of countries in the Balkans. Keagan has already published two substantial books arising from his research (*Wonder and Skepticism in the Middle Ages*, Routledge, and *Prester John: The Legend and its Sources*, Ashgate). We warmly congratulate these very energetic students on their great success.

The Leeds Medieval Congress this year will feature a fine representation from the Centre: with contributions from Dan Anlezark (MEMC Director), Robert Cutrer (PhD Student MEMC), [Kimberley-Joy Knight](#), Kiera Naylor (PhD Student MEMC), Lynette Olson, and [Jonathan Wooding](#).

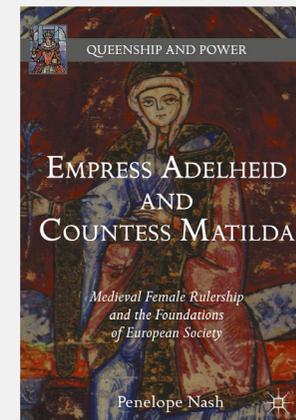
Dr [Penny Nash](#) has generously taken on the task of restructuring our rather unreformed information systems and membership lists as Information Coordinator of MEMC. If you are associated with MEMC and have not yet heard from her — beware, Penny will track you down!

Finally, you may be wondering why the past director is writing this bulletin and not the present one. The joyous reason is Ned Anlezark, born 4 May 2017, whom we are pleased to welcome to the community of Medieval and Early Modern, Sydney.

## Recent publications

Umberto Grassi, Vincenzo Lagioia, Gian Paolo Romagnani (Eds.). [Tribadi, sodomiti, invertite e invertiti, pederasti, femminelle, ermafroditi: Per una storia dell'omosessualità, della bisessualità e delle trasgressioni di genere in Italia](#). (2017, ETS).

Penelope Nash. [Empress Adelheid and Countess Matilda: Medieval Female Rulership and the Foundations of European Society](#). (2017, Palgrave Macmillan).



# Department of Studies in Religion

Words by Professor [Carole Cusack](#) | Chair of Department

## PhD and Honours Graduations

On 3 May at the Faculty of Arts graduation ceremony, two PhDs and three First Class Honours degrees were awarded in Studies in Religion. The subject matter of the five theses reveals the range of work being done in Religion, from studies on ancient Gnostic texts to analyses of online games as texts expressing religious and spiritual meaning. We congratulate our graduates warmly.

**Alexa Beal Blonner** (PhD): “Re-sacralisation in Fourteen Themes: An Historical Perspective.”

Dr Alexa Blonner’s thesis used a particular case study, the Unification Church which was founded by Reverend Sun Myung Moon in Korea and evangelised to the West, and fieldwork among specific communities on the Queensland Gold Coast, to draw out themes that indicate a possible future for religion.

**Mehmet Ozalp** (PhD): “God and *Tawhid* in Classical Islamic Theology and Said Nursi’s *Risale i-Nur*.”

Dr Mehmet Ozalp’s thesis fills a significant gap in the extensive literature on Said Nursi, showing on how he utilised a revivalist style of theological reasoning to produce an original and fresh expression of Islamic theology, which is usually a reactive discourse. The principle of unity, *tawhid*, and the unity of God are the foci.

**Giselle Lydia Bader** (Bachelor of Arts Honours, Class I): “Mind-Body Dualism in the *Apocryphon of John*.”

Giselle Bader analysed the *Apocryphon of John*, a ‘Sethian’ Gnostic text, as a Middle Platonic reinterpretation of Plato’s *Timaeus*. Plato’s forms and matter are compared to mind and body in the *Apocryphon of John*, with *apocatastasis* (restoration to a primordial state) as the Sethian resolution of this dualism.

**Erik-James Uytterhoeven-Spark** (Bachelor of Arts Honours, Class I): “Deus et Machina: From Virtual Play-Space to Transhumanist Futures.”

Erik-James Uytterhoeven-Spark’s thesis studied the online game *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided* (2016) via the lenses of transhumanism and futurology. His methodology was crafted from studies in religion, gaming, play and the ludic, liminality and Jungian archetypes, focused on the body as a site of sacredness.

**Sophie Morstyn** (Bachelors of Arts Honours, Class I): “Where Am I? Locating the Self in Psychology and Religion.”

Sophie Morstyn’s thesis was concerned with the issue of the ‘self’ and ‘religious experience’. She used Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and approaches from academic psychology to examine religious experiences that resulted from the use of psychedelic drugs and to evaluate their transformative effects.

## Breann Fallon Appointed Associate Editor with the Religious Studies Project

Words by [Breann Fallon](#)

Studies in Religion postgraduate teaching fellow [Breann Fallon](#) was recently named as an associate editor for the [Religious Studies Project](#) (RSP). The RSP is an international collaborative enterprise producing weekly podcasts with leading scholars on the social-scientific study of religion. Since its founding in 2012, the RSP has released over 200 interviews. In addition to the podcasts, the website also features weekly essays, roundtable discussions, book reviews, resources, and conference reports. The RSP is a non-profit organisation primarily supported by the British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR) and the North American Association for the Study of Religion (NAASR).

Prior to her appointment as an associate editor, Breann was the Asia-Pacific podcaster for the RSP, interviewing scholars in this region. Within our own school, Breann interviewed SLAM alumna Dr Elisha McIntyre on the interplay between religion and humour, particularly in the Mormon Church. In the most recent podcast released from the Asia-Pacific region, Breann interviewed Dr Caroline Blyth (University of Auckland) on her forthcoming edited volume on religion, gender, and gender violence.

In addition to her work in the Asia-Pacific region, Breann has undertaken interviews at major international Studies in Religion conferences. At the 2017 European Association for the Study of Religion Conference, Breann spoke with Dr Teemu Taira (University of Helsinki) on the very category of “religion”, and also to Associate Professor M. J. M. Hoondert (Tilburg University) on the role of music in the contemporary commemoration of death.

These podcasts create a casual space to discuss important concepts, traditions, scholars, and methodologies in the contemporary study of

religion, without pushing any agenda or resorting to presenting “fact files” about “World Religions”.

In her new role as associate editor, Breann will continue to podcast around the world while moving up into the international editorial team heading up the RSP, with founders Dr David Robertson (Open University UK) and Dr Christopher Cotter (Lancaster University) at the helm.

### Studies in Religion Research Seminar: Semester 1 2017

The following research seminars have been presented:

28 March: Professor Carole M. Cusack (Studies in Religion) “Harry Potter and the Sacred Text: Fiction, Reading, and Meaning-Making”.

11 April: Dr Nicola Aravecchia (Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University) “Early Christianity in Egypt’s Western Desert: Recent Archaeological Evidence from Ain el-Gedida and Amheida (Dakhleh Oasis)”.

2 May: Professor Geoffrey Samuel (University of Cardiff and University of Sydney) “Relaxation, Arousal, Mindfulness, and Tantric Practice: How Different is Vajrayana Meditation?”. \*

23 May: Jewell Homad Johnson (PhD candidate, Studies in Religion) “Medieval Pop: Warhol’s Byzantine Iconography”.

\* Co-hosted with the Australasian Association of Buddhist Studies

# Department of Theatre & Performance Studies

## PWA workshop

Words by Dr [Laura Ginters](#)

In May, the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies hosted a script development workshop of a new play by Sydney University graduate, Nick Coyle. Nick's new play, *The Feather in the Web*, was shortlisted, and then runner up, for the Griffin Theatre Company's Lysicrates Prize earlier this year. The Lysicrates Prize is unusual in that it is intended "to support established artists; recognising the significant challenges facing any writer, regardless of experience" and only writers who have had three or more mainstage plays produced are eligible to apply.

[Griffin Theatre Company](#) was then keen to develop the work further, and in partnership with PlayWriting Australia, the national script development organisation and TaPS, Nick was able to work with dramaturg Erin Taylor, director Ben Winspear and actors Camilla Ah Kin, Tina Bursill, Nikki Shiels and Gareth Davies over three days. It was a highly productive process for Nick, who brought a new draft of the script to each day of the workshop, and a fascinating opportunity for students in Laura Ginters' PRFM3611 Dramaturgy class, to observe first-hand how a new play is developed in a collaboration between writer, dramaturg, director and actors. One of the students' pieces of assessment for this course will include an analysis of the drafts of Nick's script and the ways in which dramaturgical input led to changes and improvements in the script.

## 'As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye': Comic Catharsis in *Comedy of Errors*

Words by Dr [Glen McGillivray](#)

In the Easter break, associate investigators with the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions (CHE), TaPS honorary associate Dr Chris Hay and recent graduate and tutor Dr Robin Dixon, together with Dr Glen McGillivray, hosted two staged readings of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*.

There are two compelling hypotheses for the staging techniques employed to realise this play in its original performance context, developed through rigorous textual analysis and interdisciplinary enquiry. The first involves a stage designed according to the Aristotelian Unities (a so-called "mansions" stage) with corresponding fixity of fictional place/physical space allocation and actor exits and entrances; the second follows honorary Associate Professor Tim Fitzpatrick's model for a binary arrangement of exits and entrances according to an inward/outward logic, and a relatively undefined onstage fictional place.

This project tested both these hypotheses through two staged readings using a mix of student and professional actors in front of a live audience. These readings were rehearsed and performed using Early Modern "parts", a system that had actors performing from their part only, and not the complete play.

After two riotous performances – one in the morning, one in the afternoon – the researchers held focus groups with audience members and actors. The focus group transcripts, video and photos are currently being compiled and analysed by the researchers.

This restaging of an Early Modern comedy, that remains as faithful as possible to the original conditions of performance, has provided an initial set of insights into how the dramaturgical conventions of comedy possibly achieved particular emotional effects in the audience, and lends support to the developing understanding of comic catharsis.

## Visit of Drama students from Northern Beaches Christian School

On 2 May, the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies hosted 35 year 7 to 9 students from the Northern Beaches Christian School. The students were participating in the School's annual 'Drama Camp', which included visits to theatres in the central part of Sydney and overnighting in a local hostel.

The Department threw the children in at the deep end: a two-hour workshop conducted by Ian Maxwell involving a guided reading/rehearsal of two short plays attributed to Bertolt Brecht. *He Who Says Yes* and *He Who Says No* were written by Brecht and his collaborators Elisabeth Hauptmann and Kurt Weill in 1929, and first performed at the Akademie für Kirchen und Schulmusik at the Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht in 1930. Based upon a theatre piece titled 'The Valley Hurling', *He Who Says Yes* and *He Who Says No* are examples of Brecht's most overtly dialectical body of dramatic writing, the *Lehrstücke*, or 'teaching plays', influenced by his rapidly developing engagement with Marxism.

The first play concerns a school teacher agreeing to take the young son of a sick woman on an expedition over the mountains in order to bring back medicine to cure an epidemic ravaging their village. Initially reluctant to take the child because of the danger of crossing a high pass, the teacher agrees that he may accompany the expedition as long as his mother consents. As the expedition approach the pass, the young boy collapses, exhausted, and it becomes clear that the group cannot proceed with him. After a hurried discussion, the other members of the expedition agree that, in accordance with 'the Great Custom', the boy must be left behind. However, they must first receive his consent to this cruel necessity. The boy gives his consent—the 'yes' of the play's title—and further asks that he not be left alone, but instead be hurled to his death into the valley below. They do so, complete the expedition, and return to the village with the medicine.

In the companion piece second play, the boy refuses to consent to the Great Custom compelling his companions to risk ridicule and disgrace by inaugurating a 'new custom': that of 'rethinking every new situation'.

Assembling a tottering mountain pass of stage rostra and mats, the students worked through the text, swapping roles, offering directions to each other, testing the limits of Brechtian dialectics. For all the intensity and schematicism of the texts (beware the dreaded, often poorly taught *Verfremdungseffekt*), they in fact offer rich affective, heart-rending moments, not the least of which involve the juxtaposition of the boy's responses, in the respective plays, to the demand for his consent to his own death. The group gamely argued the merits of utilitarian ethics, and the tensions between obeying institutional and institutionalised authority on one hand, and individual conscience on the other. A straw poll at the end of the process revealed no clear consensus: the dialectic, instead, revealed itself as unsettlingly resistant to easy resolution.

The session was exhausting and exhilarating. The young students maintained their attention and enthusiasm: all 35 were 'on stage' for the final moments, in which the young student defies the weight of tradition and numbers. It was deeply affecting to watch: 34 students massed on a mountain side of rostra and blocks being stared down by a single young girl. The experience more than bore out Brecht's contention: that theatre — and specifically, the labour of working on making theatre — can offer embodied and collective experiences of ethical, political and interpersonal conflict and negotiation that move debates beyond the realm of thought experiment, and into affecting and effective engagement, and that this work can be undertaken by children in their early teens.

## In *The Rex*

Words by Kirstin Bokor

### *I just can't say that word*

Vic McEwan and Mayu Kunamori were recent artists-in-residence in collaboration at the Rex Cramphorn Studio. They were working on *I just can't say that word*, made in response to Mayu's diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer in 2016. You can follow some of this journey by logging onto the blog [I just can't say that word](#). It explores creatively some issues to do with treatment and recovery, for example *Toro-nagashi*, a Japanese ceremony in which participants float paper lanterns down a river. It is traditionally performed during the O-bon Festival in the belief that it will help to guide the souls of the departed to the spirit world.

The lanterns were made using hand-made paper and some of Mayu's hair – hair lost in chemo, or from her *danpatsu-shiki* or hair cutting ceremony.

The project aims to explore illness, trauma and identity. Whilst Mayu and Vic are the nexus, this project weaves into itself a vast community of

artists, academics, oncologists, patients, art therapists and breast cancer specialists, together with artists who explore the field of arts/health. Some of the artists involved already include Michelle Mossop, Tess de Quincey, Amber Silk, Martin Fox, Rakini Devi, Miho Watanabe and Zela Bissett.

It is anticipated that the project will develop into a performance installation.

Vic and Mayu were extremely generous with their time, welcoming PRFM 3963 and PRFM 5902 students into the rehearsal space, as well as being the focus of one of the Department's Seminar Series. After the showing, there was time for conversation in which people shared their responses to the work-in-progress, particularly in relation to other "arts + health" projects.



Post-operative dream. Image courtesy Vic McEwan.

# The Writing Hub

Words by Dr [Frances Di Lauro](#) | Director

We are thrilled to congratulate our HDR candidate and Lecturer, Antoni Lee, who has been awarded a fellowship from the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in the UK. Fellowships were awarded to 23 University of Sydney staff for professionalism in learning and teaching. Antoni was one of 8 colleagues from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to be recognised for their “practice, impact and leadership in teaching and learning”. More details [here](#).



L- R: Antoni Lee, Professor Pip Patterson, Dr Amani Bell and Dr Alice Williamson.  
Image courtesy Amani Bell.

In April, we were proud to host Dr [Bronwen Dyson's](#) guest, and SLAM Visiting Fellow, Professor Gisela Håkansson, of Lund University and Østfold University College, Halden. Gisela's visit focused on *Teaching and assessing second languages from a Processability Theory perspective*. Based on her extensive research into the acquisition of Scandinavian languages, Gisela gave presentations to the Department of Linguistics and the Writing Hub on how Processability Theory (PT), a theory of

second language processing, elucidates the development of grammar by second language learners and language-impaired children. To explore PT's application to Australia, Gisela and Bronwen analysed the essays written by twenty English as an Additional Language students, according to the PT's developmental stages and Grammatical Metaphor, as proposed in Systemic Functional Linguistics. Gisela's visit achieved greater awareness among teaching staff of diverse modes of teaching and learning.

In March, [Frances Di Lauro](#) opened her unit, WRIT2002 - Argumentation Theory and Practice, in the [Week 4 // Open Door](#) initiative and colleagues visited the seminars taught by Dr Zoe Alderton and Lucinda Holdforth. “Using class discussion, a multimedia presentation (Sinead O'Connor's *Nothing Compares 2U* video clip – awesome!) and worksheets, Dr Alderton gave an insightful analysis of how pathos is used in persuading an audience. Bringing rhetorical analysis to life with a pop music classic is an exciting way to connect with students.”

Earlier in March, Dr [Alyssa O'Brien](#) presented research at the international Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in Portland, Oregon. Invited by the Conference Chair to launch a new interactive research engagement forum for conference attendees, Alyssa presented original analysis and a literature review of academic labour practices affecting women, minorities, and mid-to-late career lecturers. The innovative format of the session made possible multiple cross-institutional and international collaboration leads for future research.

At the conference, Alyssa helped celebrate the [2017 CCCC Outstanding Book Award](#) given to the peer-reviewed collection, *Transnational Writing Programs*, edited by David Martins (Utah State University Press), in which Alyssa's contribution, “Tech Travels: Connecting Writing Classes across Continents”, appears as chapter two of the book.

# contacts

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**Editor**  
Lurdes de Oliveira

**Research Editor**  
Sarah Taylor

**Layout and design**  
Lurdes de Oliveira

**Cover page photography**  
Lurdes de Oliveira

## *More Information*

If you would like more information about the School of Literature, Art and Media or to make an editorial enquiry please contact:

T: +612 9351 6855

For further information on any of the articles in this issue, please contact us on:

T: +61 2 9351 6855

E: [Lurdes de Oliveira](#) / [Sarah Taylor](#)

The following departments and programs are located in the School of Literature, Art and Media:

- Art History
- Celtic Studies
- English
- Linguistics
- Media and Communications
- Medieval and Early Modern Studies
- Museum Studies
- Studies in Religion
- Theatre and Performance Studies
- The Writing Hub

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