Some artists and philosophers walked into a room

THE THEME

A work might be experienced in numerous ways – in person, online, across multiple versions, as a record, diagram, report, description, witness account, podcast, video, plan, remix, or even as a scalable aggregate of elements. Perhaps, once we consider the world of a work of art as a constellation of elements, the indeterminacy of art is given a more conspicuous materiality. Where is a work of art? Is there an optimum or primary point of entry into a work of art?

THE EVENT

CHAIRMED BY SEAN LOWRY (VCA) & JENNY MCMAHON (UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE)

Artists and philosophers come together in a full day symposium to explore the theme through a range of individual presentations, panel discussions, commentaries & open Q&A sessions. Free entry, all welcome, but please *register to attend.

JULY 11, 9.30 – 5.00
FEDERATION HALL
VCA, SOUTHBANK

This event is co-organised by the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) and ArtSense, is partly supported by the ARC Discovery Grant DP 150103143 (which is administered by the University of Adelaide) & is sponsored by the American Society of Aesthetics.
Introduction

**09.30 – 10.00**  
Tea/coffee & greetings

**10.00 – 10.05**  
*Introduction*  
Sean Lowry (VCA) and Jenny McMahon (Philosophy, Adelaide)

**10.05 – 10.20**  
Claire Lambe (independent artist) discusses the theme from the perspective of a practising artist with fellow artist Cate Consandine (VCA).

**10.20 – 10.30**  
Q & A and discussion

**10.35 – 10.50**  
Robert Sinnerbrink (Philosophy, Macquarie) introduces the theme from a philosophical perspective.

**10.50 – 11.00**  
Q & A and discussion

**11.00 – 11.15**  
Rowan McNaught (MFA candidate/VCA)

**11.15 – 11.30**  
Sophie Tackach (PhD candidate/Monash)

**11.30 – 11.45**  
Edward Colless (VCA)

**11.45 – 12.15**  
Panel of 3 artists and 3 philosophers each given 5 mins to ask a question or comment. Artists: Kate Just (VCA), Raafat Ishak (VCA), and Lisa Radford (VCA). Philosophers: David Macarthur (Sydney), Michael Newall (Kent), Mohan Matthen (Toronto).

**12.15 – 12.30**  
Q & A and discussion

**12.30 – 1.30**  
Lunch

**1.30 – 1.45**  
Vanessa Godden (PhD candidate/VCA)

**1.45 – 2.00**  
Geoff Robinson (PG candidate Monash)

**2.00 – 2.15**  
Tessa Laird (VCA) and Andrew Goodman

**2.15 – 2.30**  
Bernhard Sachs (VCA)

**2.30 – 3.00**  
Panel of 3 philosophers and 3 artists each given 5 mins to ask a question or comment. Philosophers: James Phillips (UNSW), Cynthia Freeland (Houston), Paul Guyer (Brown). Artists: Barb Bolt (VCA), David Sequeira (VCA), and Kiron Robinson (VCA).

**3.00 – 3.15**  
Q & A and discussion

**3.15 – 3.45**  
*Afternoon tea/coffee*

**3.45 – 4.00**  
Daniel von Sturmer (Fine Arts, Monash) discusses the theme from the perspective of a practising artist.

**4.00 – 4.10**  
Q & A and discussion

**4.15 – 4.30**  
Justin Clemens (Culture & Communication, Melbourne) discusses the theme from a philosophical perspective.

**4.30 – 4.40**  
Q & A and discussion

**4.45 – 5.00**  
*Closing remarks:*  
Elizabeth Coleman (Media and Communication, Monash), Sean Cordeiro (visual artist), Claire Healy (visual artist), Sean Lowry (VCA) and Jenny McMahon (Philosophy, Adelaide).

COFFEE/TEA/SNACKS AVAILABLE FROM 9.30-11AM & FROM 3.00-3.45 PM
Barbara Bolt is Professor in Contemporary Arts and Culture and is Associate Dean of Research at the VCA and MCM at the University of Melbourne. She is a practising artist and theorist whose practice and writing has been shaped by and has shaped new materialist theorisations of art. She has written extensively on artistic research and the ethical implications of artistic research. She is author of Art Beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image (2004) and Heidegger Reframed: Interpreting Key Thinkers for the Arts (2011) and has co-edited four volumes including Material Inventions: Applying Creative Arts Research (2014), Carnal Knowledge: Towards a “New Materialism” through the Arts (2013) and Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry (2007). Website: barbbolt.com

Elizabeth Burns Coleman lectures in Media and Communications Studies at Monash University, Australia. She writes on freedom of expression and cross-cultural communication. An important and influential paper is “Appreciating ‘Traditional’ Aboriginal Painting Aesthetically” in The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 2004, 62 (3): 235-47. She has received two postdoctoral fellowships, from the Australian National University’s Centre for Cross Cultural Research, and from Monash across Communications and Philosophy. Elizabeth has contributed to many books, published numerous journal articles and her ground-breaking monograph Aboriginal Art, Identity and Appropriation was published by Ashgate in 2005.

Edward Colless is the Editor of Art + Australia and Senior Lecturer & Head of Critical and Theoretical Studies at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, where he has worked since 2001. He has been employed in several tertiary institutions as a lecturer in art and cultural history, aesthetics, cinema studies, and design with practical teaching in performance. In addition to a steady output of writing (which has included art criticism and journalism, book and film reviewing, fiction and travel), he has also worked at various times as a professional theatre director, as a filmmaker, curator, and architectural assistant. An anthology of his selected writing, The Error of My Ways, published in 1995, was nominated for the NSW Premier’s Prize for Literature. Colless has also been short-listed for the Pascall Prize for Criticism. He has been features writer and associate editor of Australian Art Collector since its inauguration and has worked as Melbourne art reviewer for The Australian newspaper. He has received numerous grants for critical writing from the Australia Council.

Cate Consandine is a visual artist, Lecturer, and Coordinator of the Honours Program at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne. Consandine works across a wide range of formal and discursive mediums, including sculpture and spatial practice, video and performance. She has exhibited internationally at the ICA in London, The Museum of Contemporary Art in Taiwan, The POSCO Art Gallery in South Korea, and the Galeri Soemardja in Indonesia. Solo exhibitions include Cut Colony at the Art Gallery of NSW (2012), still point/turning world at Sarah Scout (2015), Candy Cane at Gertrude Contemporary (2006) and Cold Cut, Eye-Stalk at Heide Museum of Modern Art (2006). Consandine created the set design for In-Finite, part of the Australian Ballet’s Bodytorque season (2013) and recently curated The Wandering I (2016) at the Center for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne. Consandine is represented by Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne.

Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy are visual artists who have received considerable recognition for their work, as evidenced by invitations to hold significant exhibitions in galleries and museums in Europe and Asia, including the Corcoran in Washington DC (2011-12); a mid-career survey of their work held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2012) and as Australia’s representative at
Justin Clemens is the author of many books, including *Psychoanalysis is an Antiphilosophy* (Edinburgh UP 2013), *Minimal Domination* (Surplus 2011) and, with A.J. Bartlett and Jon Roffe, *Lacan Deleuze Badiou* (Edinburgh 2014). In addition to historical studies of writers such as François Villon and John Milton, he writes extensively about contemporary Australian art and literature, including reviews and essays of artists such as Susan Cohn, Juan Davila and Philip Hunter. His poetry includes the collection *Villain* (Hunter 2009) and the long mock epic *The Mundiad* (Hunter 2013), the latter shortlisted for the NSW Premier’s Prize. He is currently the recipient of an ARC Future Fellow award, working on ‘Australian Poetry Today.’ He is an Associate Professor at the University of Melbourne.

Cynthia Freeland is the John and Rebecca Moores Professor of Philosophy at the University of Houston. She publishes extensively on aesthetics, ancient philosophy and feminist philosophy. Cynthia’s 2001 book *Art Theory: A Very Short Introduction* published by Oxford University Press has been translated into fourteen different languages. Her most recent book *Portraits and Persons*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2010. Freeland gives many public lectures including the National Portrait Gallery Annual Lecture in Canberra Australia in 2011, in addition to an invited Symposium at the Tate Modern, London. She will also present a public lecture on Portraits at the AGNSW on July 12th as part of the public program of events for the 2017 Archibald Prize.

Vanessa Godden is a PhD candidate at the Victorian College of the Arts and recipient of the Melbourne International Research Scholarship. She received her BFA from the University of Houston (2012) and MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design (2014). Her studio research uses performative gestures to explore how personal histories of sexual assault, cultural heritage, and the body in relation to geographic space can be conveyed through material engagements with the body. Website: [vanessagodden.com](http://vanessagodden.com)

Andrew Goodman is a visual artist whose practice encompasses sculpture, sound, interactive technologies and performance. He teaches at La Trobe University and the Victorian College of the Arts. He writes on art and process philosophy and collaborates with Montreal based art-philosophy research group the Senselab based at Concordia University.

Paul Guyer is the Jonathan Nelson Professor of Humanities and Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy at Brown University. He has authored numerous books and journal articles on Immanuel Kant and the History of Philosophy and is considered one of the most authoritative and eminent scholars on the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Of particular relevance to this Symposium, Guyer wrote the definitive three volume *History of Modern Aesthetics*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2014.


Kate Just is an American-born Australian artist and the Graduate Coursework Coordinator at the School of Art. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the VCA, a Master of Arts from RMIT and a PhD in Sculpture from Monash University. Since 2002, Just has created an expansive body of visual art work in a diversity of media including knitting, resin, clay, collage and photo-media. Central to her
practice is the exploration of feminist representations of the body. Just’s use of knitting across many works casts craft as a highly engaging sculptural medium, a poetic or political tool.

**Tessa Laird** is an artist, writer and Lecturer in Critical and Theoretical Studies at VCA School of Art. For twenty years she was a prominent art critic in New Zealand, where she founded two art magazines, *Monica Reviews Art* and *LOG Illustrated*. In 2013 she published *A Rainbow Reader*, which came out of her doctoral studies on colour. In 2018 her book on bats will be published as part of Reaktion’s *Animal* series. She has written numerous catalogue essays and journal articles focusing particularly on New Zealand artists, human-animal relations, sci-fi, psychedelia, and experimental film. She is the editor of *Art + Australia Online*.

**Claire Lambe** is an artist, born in Macclesfield, UK who lives and works in Melbourne. She received a Master of Fine Arts at Goldsmiths, London and is represented by Sarah Scout Presents. At the invitation of Max Delany, ACCA’s Artistic Director and curator Annika Kristenson, Lambe was commissioned to make a new body of work, *Mother Holding Something Horrific* for ACCA’s 2017 *Influential Australian Artists* Series. Lambe was awarded the Sir Edwards Trust residency at ISCP, New York in 2016 and will be in London in 2018 attending ACME Australia council studio residency.

**Sean Lowry** is a Melbourne-based artist and writer and currently Head of Critical and Theoretical Studies at VCA School of Art. Lowry has exhibited and performed extensively both nationally and internationally, and his published writing appears in numerous journals and edited volumes. His conceptually driven practice employs strategies of concealment, subliminal quotation, erasure, remediation and intermedial expansion to explore the outermost limits of the world of a work of art. Lowry is also Founder and Executive Director of *Project Anywhere*, and one half (with Ilmar Taimre) of *The Ghosts of Nothing*. Website: seanlowry.com

**David Macarthur** is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Sydney. He works at the interface of contemporary pragmatism, Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language and philosophy of art (architecture, photography & film). Two of the main concerns of his current research are 1) to explore the ways the issue of skepticism about other minds plays out in our creation of, and engagement with, art; and 2) to develop a “Liberal Naturalism” in contrast to Scientific Naturalism. The conceptual framework of Liberal Naturalism is articulated in two volumes that he has co-edited with Mario De Caro (Roma Tré): *Naturalism in Question* (Harvard UP, 2004); *Naturalism and Normativity* (Columbia UP, 2010).

**Mohan Matthen** is Professor and Senior Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Perception at the University of Toronto. Mohan contributes to many books and publishes numerous journal articles on multimodal perception, active perception, the perceptual representation of space and recently, aesthetic pleasure. A recent monograph is *Seeing, Doing, and Knowing: A Philosophical Theory of Sense Perception* published by Oxford Clarendon Press in 2005. Matthen wrote the target article for the inaugural issue of the *Australasian Philosophical Review*, 1.1: 6-28 and 100-111 (March) 2017.

**Jennifer A. McMahon** is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Adelaide. She is the author of *Art and Ethics in a Material World: Kant’s Pragmatist Legacy* (Routledge 2014) and *Aesthetics and Material Beauty: Aesthetics Naturalized* (Routledge 2007). She is the guest editor of the inaugural issue of the *Australasian Philosophical Review* on “The Pleasure of Art” (March 2017), Chief Investigator for the Australian Research Council funded project ArtSense: taste and community; and member of the Executive Committee, the Australasian Association of Philosophy.

**Rowan McNaught** is an artist and designer in Melbourne, Australia. He was a founding editor and designer of the *West Space Journal* (2013-16), an online platform for criticism and commissions. His work, often collaborative, has been shown across Australia and Southeast Asia, most recently...

**Michael Newall** is a philosopher who is currently Director of Learning & Teaching for the School of Arts, and Director of the MA in Philosophy of Art & Aesthetics at the University of Kent, Canterbury, UK. His expertise spans art history and theory, and philosophy of art and aesthetics. In philosophy of art, he has a special concern with the philosophy and aesthetics of visual art. His interest in contemporary art and Australian art has developed in part from his earlier work as a critic and curator. Much of his current teaching and research explores the potential for productive meetings of the two disciplines of art history and philosophy of art.

**James Phillips** is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of New South Wales. His research lies in the areas of political philosophy, aesthetics, literary criticism and film studies. He is the author of *Heidegger’s Volk: Between National Socialism and Poetry* (2005) and *The Equivocation of Reason: Kleist Reading Kant* (2007) and the editor of *Cinematic Thinking: Philosophical Approaches to the New Cinema* (2008), all published with Stanford University Press.

**Lisa Radford.** As an artist who writes and teaches, Radford is interested in the boundaries of language and its distribution. In the past she has described this as an exploration of the shared space between images, place and people through writing, editing, exhibition making and education where her methodology utilises conversation and correspondence as a way of enacting politics through friendship and de-centralised collectivity. At times, this takes form through painting, at other times in response to artist’s work through the practice of writing. These acts always occur in relation to and with other people though collaboration and conversation.

**Geoff Robinson** is a Melbourne-based artist who creates event-based artworks that explore the relationship between the durational qualities of sound and performance and the spatial conditions of physical sites. Recent projects include: *Itinerant Object/Propositions for Change*, Sarah Scout Presents (2016); *room overlay/5 weeks/thursdays 6-7pm/accumulation*, West Space (2015); *15 locations/15 minutes/15 days*, Federation Square Melbourne (2014); *Site Overlay/Acoustic Survey* across three public sites in Melbourne (2013). Robinson has held residencies and exhibited at Helsinki International Artist Programme, MoKS Estonia and Seoul Art Space. He was awarded the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture 2014 and is a PhD candidate in Fine Art at Monash University. Website: [geoffrobinsonprojects.com](http://geoffrobinsonprojects.com)

**Kiron Robinson** is an artist interested in the possibility of using the ideas of doubt and belief as constructive devices. Continually chasing ways of articulating, that which by its own definition is beyond articulation, leads to a paradoxical reasoning in Robinson’s work, which unravels as it constructs. Materials are chosen and placed with great care. Robinson has lectured at the Victorian College of the Arts since 2008 and attained his PhD from Monash University in 2013.

**Bernhard Sachs**

*Because we are not their masks even the most bizarre perversions suffer from the principle of refinement.*

Pier Paolo Pasolini. *Salo.*

**David Sequeira** is Director, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, VCA. Much of David’s research has focused on the use of colour and geometry in the creation of contemplative experiences. His current research explores curatorship as art practice. David has exhibited his work extensively throughout Australia and his work is held in important public collections including the National Gallery of Australia. Prior to his appointment at the VCA, David held senior positions in engagement and audience development in a range of cultural institutions including the National Gallery of Australia, National Portrait Gallery, Australian Parliament House and National Film and Sound Archive.
Robert Sinnerbrink is an Australian Research Council Future Fellow in Philosophy at Macquarie University. He publishes extensively on philosophy of film including Cinematic Ethics: Exploring Ethical Experience through Film published in 2016 by Routledge.

Daniel von Sturmer is an artist and Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Monash University. His practice involves video, photography, installation and architectural interventions. His works draw connections between psychology and philosophy, making manifest the psychological and perceptual elements at play in the encounter with artworks. Von Sturmer has exhibited at numerous international public venues, including Australian Centre of Contemporary Art (Melbourne), Gothenberg Museum of Art (Sweden), and Venice Biennale (Italy). Recent solo exhibitions include Electric Light, Anna Schwartz Gallery (Melbourne, 2016), Focus & Field, Young Projects Gallery (Los Angeles, 2014), These Constructs, Anna Schwartz Gallery (Melbourne, 2014), Video Works, Karsten Schubert Gallery (London, 2010). He is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne.

Sophie Takách is an emerging artist currently undertaking postgraduate studies at Monash Art, Design and Architecture (MADA) at Monash University in Melbourne. Takách has an object based sculptural practice which incorporates performative action and ephemeral installation. Her most recent exhibition was From one body to another at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Casula NSW with Fayen d’Evie. She has exhibited locally and internationally, previous exhibitions include: Human Commonalities with Fayen d’Evie, V.A.C. Moscow; The Material Turn curated by Rebecca Coates, Margaret Lawrence Gallery; (peculiar/particulate), A working model collaboration with Susan Jacobs, c3 Contemporary Art Space; and Benglis 73/74 curated by Geoff Newton at Sutton Gallery Project Space. A durational installation of site specific work was installed at Testing Grounds, Melbourne. Takách’s work is included in the artist book collection of Monash University and held in private collections. She lives and works in Melbourne.