

Date

Thursday August 19, 2010

Time

2pm - 4:30pm

Venue

The Gallery
Female Orphan School
Building EZ
Parramatta Campus
([view map](#))

RSVP

Christy Nguy
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Apologies

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[View 2010 Seminar
schedule](#)

Fiona Cameron

(CCR, University of Western Sydney)

Challenging the New Museology:

Border Crossings and an Emerging Complex Museum

Disciplinary-based heritage documentation systems remain a powerful framework for organizing producing and controlling knowledge as hermetically sealed and largely uncontested authorised discourses, practices that are deeply entrenched and sustained by networks and communities of practice. In this paper we draw on the findings from the Australian Research Council Linkage project *Reconceptualising Heritage Collections* project based at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney Australia and in particular research undertaken around the museum's Palestinian collections through wikis and focus groups with a range of constituencies in Australia, Israel and Palestine. The findings illustrated the highly political interactions of objects, ones that occur across trans-national borders sit uneasily with museum discourse and practice. The objects instead became visible mechanisms to confront the complex relations and politics of borders between the museum and everyday life, and between social experiences. 'Cosmopolitics' in terms of its ethical outlook, trans-national as well as its banal aspects along with cultural complexity (Tomlinson 1999; Kwane 2006; Urry 2003; Mol and Law 2002) enables an exploration of these dynamics and the shifting borders and 'borderless dynamic' of an emerging complex museum, as well as its resistive forces both from within and across the various stakeholder groups. Images for the future imaginary of these interactions are further explored through the pathway of chaos theory. Ultimately, in order to manage complexity and to sort out the desirable and undesirable effects and interactions, the museum system is challenged to re-align its cognitive and practical ordering of the world.

Dr Fiona Cameron is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney. She has researched and published widely on museums their roles and agency in contemporary societies around 'hot' topics of societal importance and climate change, and digital media and heritage collections. Fiona is Chief Investigator for the Australian Research Council Linkage project *Reconceptualising Heritage Collections* and the Australian Research Council Linkage project, *Hot Science Global Citizens the agency of the museum sector in climate change interventions*. Books include two co-edited collections, *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage: A Critical Discourse* (MIT Press, 2007), *Hot Topics, Public Culture, Museums* (Cambridge Scholars, 2010).

Russell Staiff

(CCR, University of Western Sydney)

Re-imagining Heritage Interpretation

The presentation examines the ways heritage and tourists engage, hypothesizing about a necessary re-thinking of heritage interpretation for visitors that goes beyond interpretation as the transfer of information/significance/knowledge as didacticism grounded in learning theory, and moves towards an interpretation praxis that embraces an embodied experience and an experience where vision and visuality is privileged. Both these dimensions are at the forefront of the ways digital media is reconfiguring the relationship between heritage places and visitors.

Dr Russell Staiff researches in the inter-related areas of cultural and heritage tourism, cultural heritage management and heritage interpretation. He also focuses on further intersecting areas of research such as museums, national parks, built heritage and, in particular, World Heritage Sites.

He is the Chief Investigator for the research project, Interpretation at World Heritage Sites in Thailand: Ayutthaya and Sukothai Historical Parks, in partnership with UNESCO and Silpakorn University, Bangkok.