

'Grounding Law'

6-8 December 2012

Melbourne Doctoral Forum on Legal Theory

The fifth annual Melbourne Doctoral Forum on Legal Theory will be held at the Melbourne Law School, Melbourne, 6-8 December 2012. It will again bring together higher research students and early career researchers from all disciplines and across diverse fields of scholarship to critically engage with law and its theoretical and methodological questions.

This year we explore how the challenge of 'grounding' law could offer a critical and political engagement with and responsibility for law. This is a different task to legitimating or substantiating a new foundation, basis or ground for law. Deconstructive jurisprudence has exposed the constituted violence inherent in every asserted or disavowed ground of law. To ground, as a verb, could mean to connect something to the ground – to the surface of the Earth, the terrain, the soil, the humus. It could mean to connect to the immediacy of the present moment through affect and the senses. Grounding law may be a process of finding law in, and making law more responsive to, the question of particularity and immediacy, to the imperatives of being and dwelling.

Possible topics may include (this list is non-exhaustive):

- the force of law: rethinking violence as a ground of law
- the ecological crisis: the relationship between law and the environment
- land, sky, sea: the ethereal and terrestrial in law's cosmos
- Indigenous jurisprudence
- settling/settler laws in the international
- radical legal pluralism, religious laws and customary laws
- the place and space of law
- the Occupy Movement and/or resistance as a grounding project
- the groundless community of global capitalism: the disciplinarity, (ir)regularity and cooperativity of law
- grounding fiscal reform in economies of (dis)possession, austerity and surplus, accumulation and expenditure
- methodologies of legal ethnography, history and geography
- transmission, transplantation and legacies of law making
- constituting community: critical constitutionalism and administrative law

Send abstracts of 500 words (max) and biographies of 100 words to law-mdflt@unimelb.edu.au by Monday 6 August 2012. A limited number of bursaries will be available for interstate and international presenting participants who are unable to claim funding to cover the full cost of travel from their home institution. The bursaries are intended to contribute towards travel expenses. Please indicate in your application whether you would like to be considered for a bursary.

Conference Organisers: Julia Dehm, Marc Trabsky and Timothy Neale

www.mdflt.law.unimelb.edu.au

Nicholas Mangan
Flohetrauling, 2008 (detail)
Image courtesy the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne

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