

2 OCTOBER 2019

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S HISTORY NETWORK
SYMPOSIUM 2019

The female frame

**Biopolitics and Wellbeing in Australian
and Global Perspective**



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**

The University of Western Australia
Perth, Australia

Welcome to Australian Women's History Network's 2019 Symposium!

The Australian Women's History Network promotes research and writing in all fields of women's history. It brings together scholars, students and others working in women's history to exchange ideas, information, support and resources.

The Network publishes *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal*. The journal, first published in Melbourne in 1984, is peer-reviewed and publishes articles and reviews in all areas of women's, feminist and gender history (not limited to Australia) each year.

Our blog, *VIDA: Blog of the Australian Women's History Network*, welcomes contributions from feminist historians throughout their career, both within and beyond the academy.

We are affiliated with the International Federation for Research in Women's History and hold a membership to the Australian Historical Association.

Symposium Committee Members:

Dr Samantha Owen, Curtin University

Dr Iva Glisic, Australian Academy of the Humanities

Dr Parisa Shams, University of Western Australia

Kelly Bailey, Postgraduate Student, Curtin University

Jessica Murray, Postgraduate Student, University of Western Australia

For more information or to join the Network, contact:

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Table of Contents

Welcome to Australian Women’s History Network’s 2019 Symposium!.....	1
Symposium Committee Members:	1
Symposium Program	3
ABSTRACTS.....	5
Keynote Address (9:15–10:15 AM)	5
Professor Tanya Fitzgerald.....	5
Keynote Address (4:30–5:30 PM)	7
Em Hon. Professor Ann Curthoys.....	7
Symposium Presentations.....	8
Toni Church	8
Dr Kate Fitch	9
Dr Laura Glitsos	10
Bronwyn Anne Beech Jones.....	11
Associate Professor Catherine Kevin	12
Professor Diane Kirby and Dr Emma Robertson.....	13
Dr Hannah Loney.....	14
Dr Claire Lowrie.....	15
Associate Professor Julia Martínez.....	16
Dr Petra Mosmann	17
Dr Leigh Straw.....	18
Alexandra Wallis.....	19
Information	20

Symposium Program

Location: The University Club of Western Australia, Perth

Date: October 2, 2019

(Panel papers: Each speaker is allocated 15 minutes for paper presentation followed by 5 minutes for discussion)

8:30–9:00	REGISTRATION (tea and coffee provided)
9:00–9:15	Welcome to Country <i>TBA</i> Welcome
9:15–10:15	Keynote Address “In the Frame: Academic Women and Intimate Friendships 1920-1960” <i>Professor Tanya Fitzgerald, UWA</i> Chair: Samantha Owen
10:15-10:40	Morning Tea
10:40–12:00	SESSION ONE
	Institutions and Representation
10:40–11:00	Chair: Jessica Murray Professor Diane Kirby/Dr Emma Robertson: Hard Hats and Dungarees: Gendered Industrial Dress and Women Workers
11:00–11:20	Toni Church: Exhibiting Autonomy: Representations of Women in Australian Museums
11:20–11:40	Dr Petra Mosmann: Corporeal Feminist Archive: Reading Faith Bandler’s Gloves as ‘Feminist Objects’
11:40–12:00	Dr Kate Fitch: The PR Body: Representations of Women in an Australian Public Relations Journal, 1965-1972
12:00–1:00	Lunch [UWA Publishing will attend]
1:00–2:20	SESSION TWO
	Sex and Gendered Expectations
1:00–1:20	Chair: Parisa Shams Alexandra Wallis: Extreme Lactation: Lactational Insanity and the Female Patients at the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum, 1858-1908
1:20–1:40	Associate Professor Catherine Kevin: Approaching a History of Pregnancy and Interpersonal Violence in Twentieth Century Australia
1:40–2:00	Dr Hannah Loney: Reproducing the Modern Family: The Local Dynamics of Family Planning in New Order Indonesia
2:00–2:20	Dr Laura Glitsos: Nice Girls Don’t Jive: The Rise and Fade of Women in Perth Music from the Late 1950s to the Early 1970s

2:20–2:30	Break
2:30–3:50	SESSION THREE
	Body, Gender, and Mobility
2:30–2:50	Chair: Samantha Owen Associate Professor Julia Martinez: ‘Protecting’ Chinese Women in Prostitution in 1880s Darwin
2:50–3:10	Bronwyn Anne Beech Jones: ‘For My Body is Far in the <i>Rantau</i> ’: Embodied Experiences of Migration and Belonging in the Sumatran Women’s Newspaper <i>Soenting Melajoe</i> (1912-1921)
3:10–3:30	Dr Claire Lowrie: Women’s Drinking Habits in the Tropics: Colonialism and Climate Adaptation in Southeast Asia and Northern Australia, 1800s-1930s
3:30–3:50	Dr Leigh Straw: ‘A Gallant Woman’: The Construction of Female Identities in Lillian Armfield’s Police Work
3:50–4:30	Afternoon Tea (includes walking to Alexander Lecture Theatre for Keynote Address)
4:30–6pm	Keynote Address “An African-American Feminist Visits Perth in 1960: Who She Met, What She Saw, What She Said, and What She Wore.” <i>Em. Hon. Professor Ann Curthoys, UWA</i> Chair: <i>Wesfarmers Chair of Australian History, Professor Jane Lydon</i>
7:00	Dinner at Little Way, Nedlands

ABSTRACTS

Keynote Address (9:15–10:15 AM)

Professor Tanya Fitzgerald

In the frame: Academic women and intimate friendships 1920-1960

Established in 1919, the International Federation of University Women (IFUW) brought women together across national borders who shared a commitment to international understanding and the expansion of opportunities for university educated women. From its inception, the IFUW created the impetus for talented women to travel, cultivate international networks and friendships, and agitate for change. As the career biographies of Virginia Crocheron Gildersleeve (1877–1965) and Caroline Spurgeon (1869–1942) illustrate, their friendship and connections across the IFUW were deeply marked by their own personal ties, social practices and traditions. Less discussed and somewhat overlooked is the emotional and intimate friendship of Gildersleeve and Spurgeon. As insiders to a homosocial world, these two women were tied together in numerous ways; intellectually and professionally, economically and domestically, socially and emotionally. Theirs was a world in which they shared a co-existence at work, at leisure, and in their private lives. Their public lives were marked by their achievements in their respective universities and scholarly fields as well as their intellectual contributions to the IFUW and its central mission. Yet in the early decades of the twentieth centuries their intimate friendship was seldom publicly acknowledged. In this paper I concentrate on framing the complexities of Gildersleeve and Spurgeon's lives and ways in which they individually and jointly transcended contemporary norms.

Biography

Tanya Fitzgerald is Professor of Higher Education and Dean and Head of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Western Australia. Her research interests span the history of women's higher education, and higher education policy and leadership. Recent publications include a major reference work *International Handbook of Historical Studies in Education* (Springer, 2020) *Historical Perspectives on Teacher Preparation in Aotearoa New Zealand* (with Sally Knipe, Emerald, 2019). Tanya is currently working on a history of scholarly women, academic diplomacy and the International Federation of University Women and has recently completed an ARC-funded project: *Fostering women leaders through educational exchange 1930-1980* (with Diane Kirkby and Vera Mackie).

Keynote Address (4:30–6PM)

Em. Hon. Professor Ann Curthoys

An African-American feminist visits Perth in 1960: who she met, what she saw, what she said, and what she wore.

In December 1960, Eslanda Robeson visited Perth with her famous husband, singer and actor Paul Robeson. She gave several press and radio interviews, and spoke to university students, a Peace Council reception, and to the Union of Australian women, including Aboriginal women. In these talks, she consistently emphasised the role of women in international struggles for racial equality and peace. Newspaper interviews often emphasised her appearance, contrasting her tiny physique with Paul's huge powerful figure, and portraying her as sparkling and dynamic. Although no-one in Australia knew it at the time, she was recovering from extensive radiotherapy for several cancers, and died from breast cancer in New York five years later. In the book Ann Curthoys is writing on the Robesons' visit to Australia in 1960, the Perth visit is the subject of the last chapter, bringing together issues of women's rights; Aboriginal rights; health, illness and celebrity; and the meaning of peace in the Cold War.

Biography

Ann Curthoys is a historian who writes about Australian history in a transnational and imperial frame and about questions of history, theory, and writing. In addition to many essays and co-edited essay collections on topics ranging from women's historical writing to the Cold War, her books include *For and Against Feminism* (1988); *Freedom Ride: A Freedomrider Remembers* (2002); (with John Docker) *Is History Fiction?* (2005); (with Ann Genovese and Alexander Reilly), *Rights and Redemption: History, Law, and Indigenous People* (2008), and (with Ann McGrath), *How to Write History that People Want to Read* (2009). Her latest book is (with Jessie Mitchell), *Taking Liberty: Indigenous Rights and Settler Self-Government in the Australian Colonies, 1830 - 1890* (2018). She is an Emeritus Professor at ANU, and an Honorary Professor at The University of Western Australia and the University of Sydney.

Symposium Presentations

Toni Church

Exhibiting Autonomy: Representations of Women in Australian Museums

The gender bias in Australian collective memory has largely relegated women to abstractions of their husbands or male guardians, aligned with their historical expectations. Public history, particularly the physical representation of women in museums and galleries, has been less progressive in reflecting the evolution of women's representation in Australian historiography. While scholars have reconciled the autonomy of Australian women of our past, recognising their active role in nation-building through the writing of feminist histories, this now-widely-accepted history has been less well translated into displays in our public memory institutions.

The representation of women in galleries informs perceptions of women in society. Museum exhibitions are imbued with qualitative cultural information and meaning – led by curatorial intent, but also inflected with visitor-made meaning. Subtle nuances of text and design communicate messages, overt or subliminal, to audiences who carry pre-conceived cultural understandings about the world around them. Field work conducted in Australian museums since 2017 highlighted the discord between understandings of the historical role and autonomy of Australian women, and the translation of their stories into exhibition spaces. This paper addresses how curatorial intent and visitor interpretation produce understandings of Australian womanhood within museum exhibitions and questions the methodology of displays in accurately portraying their autonomous voices and experiences.

Biography

Toni Church is a PhD candidate and sessional academic at the University of Notre Dame Australia. After working and volunteering with Western Australian Museum, National Trust of Western Australia, National Anzac Centre and Sydney Living Museums, Toni commenced a creative PhD project to combine her passions for Australian and women's histories with her professional museum experience.

Dr Kate Fitch

The PR Body: Representations of Women in an Australian Public Relations Journal, 1965–1972

This paper analyses the diverse representation of the female body in an Australian public relations journal between 1965 and 1972, in order to understand how shifting gender dynamics in Australian society played out in the industry. It draws on feminist theories of embodiment to consider how historical tensions inform current understandings of the field, particularly in terms of constructing a professional occupational identity.

Women are represented in the journal as wives, secretaries, consumers, practitioners, and as 'body parts' in art and design. There are more representations of the female body or body parts in the journal than there are images of expert female practitioners, despite evidence of established senior women in the industry. The body theme emerged in the analysis of advertisements, photography, cover art, and graphic design. Images include nude photographs, illustrations of women's breasts, and other body parts such as fingers and heads to advertise secretarial services. The use of photographic models, body parts and even naked bodies for illustrative purposes points to the objectification and sexualisation of women and are typical of the framing of feminised labour as an extension of the body.

This paper argues women's restricted representation in the journal points to longstanding fissures along gender lines that continue to influence understandings of professional practice and occupational identity. It confirms the marginalisation of women from professional conceptualisations and the complex operation of gender on the occupational identity of public relations. Finally, the paper highlights the need for a more historically informed position on women, embodiment and media work and the significance for contemporary promotional work today.

Biography

Dr Kate Fitch is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Media, Film and Journalism at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, where she coordinates the public relations specialisation. Dr Fitch previously worked at Murdoch University, where she founded the public relations major and chaired the program for 10 years. Her current research investigates sociocultural perspectives on public relations, focusing on gender and history. Her book, *Professionalizing Public Relations: History, Gender and Education*, published by Palgrave in 2016, offered a sociological history of Australian public relations in the twentieth century drawing on archival and interview research. Recent publications focus on women in public relations, history and historiography.

Dr Laura Glitsos

“Nice Girls Don’t Jive: The Rise and Fade of Women in Perth Music from the Late 1950s to the Early 1970s”

This presentation traces the historical and social particularities that shaped women’s experiences as musicians in Perth popular music in the 1950s through to the early 1970s. In particular, I focus on the early rock and roll scene styled around the British influence that was popular in Perth during this time. The purpose of this article is to reveal the very real contributions that women made to the early period of popular music in Perth despite the many disadvantages and challenges they faced. This research also reveals a presence of women as musicians during the late 1950s and 1960s that would recede by the early 1970s, likely as a result of the rise of Oz Rock and reactionary conservatism against second wave feminism. These narratives become of particular importance in the renewed context of a recent backlash and the rise of an alt-right conservatism.

This paper has been published as a peer-review article in the journal of *Continuum*.

Biography

Laura Glitsos is an early-career researcher who has published in popular music studies and popular music histories. She has lectured in communications and cultural studies across several institutions and has also worked as a music journalist and professional vocalist in Perth, Western Australia. Her forthcoming book, *Somatechnics and Popular Music in Digital Contexts*, will be published through Palgrave MacMillan.

Bronwyn Anne Beech Jones

'For My Body is Far in the *Rantau*': Embodied Experiences of Migration and Belonging in the Sumatran Women's Newspaper *Soenting Melajoe* (1912-1921)

This presentation examines the centrality of the body to women's prose and poetry accounts of migration in *Soenting Melajoe* (1912-1921), the first newspaper exclusively edited by women in the Netherlands East Indies. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's (1999: 343) influential idea of 'home as an outer skin', I first compare how women described their affective reactions and emotions when embarking, arriving, staying, and returning as part of familial and spousal co-migration. These accounts problematise ideas of a set 'female frame'. Particularly they challenge a binary between a feminine home and a masculine *rantau* (settlements outside West Sumatra's highlands) as the respective sites of matrilineal, property-owning Minangkabau women and mobile economic migrant men; a dichotomy popularised in colonial-era fiction and repeated by generations of ethnographers (Salazar 2016, Postel-Coster 1992). I then focus on the under-analysed first cohorts of young Minangkabau women who moved to attend or teach at government and community-run girls' schools. Tracing the correspondence of one contributor, Siti Moetisah in 1917, I analyse how she fashioned a sense of self by recounting her dreams, embodied experiences of dislocation, and friendships with students both at school and in the newspaper. Through close, slow modes of reflexive reading, we glimpse the complexities of these young women's lives and multilayered identities which open up alternative ways of narrating histories of Indonesian women in the colonial-era. This presentation and PowerPoint aim to create space for us to reflect on women's self-articulation in print culture across cultural borders.

Biography

Bronwyn Anne Beech Jones is a first year PhD student at the University of Melbourne and holder of the Hansen Trust PhD Scholarship in History. Her thesis analyses trans-local networks of community-run girls' schools and discourses on gendered indigeneity in four early-twentieth century Sumatran women's newspapers. In mid-2018, Bronwyn completed a first-class Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in history and Indonesian with a thesis on the Minangkabau women's newspaper *Soenting Melajoe*. Bronwyn hopes to pursue future research on women's grassroots activism, education, race, and transnational linkages in colonial-era Indonesia, particularly outside Java.

Associate Professor Catherine Kevin

Approaching a History of Pregnancy and Interpersonal Violence in Twentieth Century Australia

Since the 1980s, researchers in public health, medicine and sociology have been investigating pregnant women's experiences of domestic violence. In 2018 Marie Stopes Australia sought to raise the profile of a related form of violence by publishing the White Paper, *Hidden Forces. Shining a light on Reproductive Coercion*. The authors of this paper provide a definition of reproductive coercion that includes 'pressuring another person into pregnancy' and 'controlling the outcome of a person's pregnancy'. While domestic violence and reproductive coercion have had renewed visibility in Australia in recent years, these phenomena are far from unprecedented. This paper seeks to begin to historicise the relationship between pregnancy and interpersonal violence as it has been experienced by Australian women. It examines questions of methodology before presenting a number of case studies from the pre-1980 period that offer insight into this embodied experience and the discursive effects that have inflected it in a variety of ways since the early twentieth century.

Biography

Catherine Kevin is an Associate Professor in History at Flinders University. She has published on the Australian histories of reproductive rights, maternal loss, refugee mothers and children, and domestic violence. Her most recent publications include 'Creative Work: feminist representations of domestic violence in 1970s Australia', Michelle Arrow and Angela Woollacott (eds), *Everyday Revolutions: gender, sexuality and society in 1970s Australia*, Canberra: ANU Press (2019) and, with Karen Agutter, 'Lost in Translation: managing medicalised motherhood in post-World War Two Australian migrant accommodation centres' *Women's History Review* Vol. 27, No. 7, 2018, pp. 1065-1084.

Professor Diane Kirby and Dr Emma Robertson

Hard Hats and Dungarees: Gendered Industrial Dress and Women Workers

Sociologists Eicher and Higgins tell us that ‘dress is one of the most significant markers of gender identity.’ The clothes we wear encode a complex set of expectations for gendered behaviour. In an industrial setting, the development of specialised workplace clothing has been partly functional – suited to the demands and dangers of the task at hand – but has nonetheless been informed by fashions and gendered social norms. In exploring the experience of women working in occupations traditionally reserved for men, the donning of hard hats, dungarees and bomber jackets, has often been fraught with tensions. Not only has it been difficult for women to gain access to appropriate clothing for their work but in wearing, or sometimes choosing not to wear, this clothing, their gender and sexual identities, as well as their aptitude for the work, have been called into question. Our research is concentrated in transport industries, maritime and railways, where uniforms and protective industrial clothing have functioned as markers of masculinity.

Biographies

Diane Kirkby is Professor of Law and Humanities at University of Technology Sydney, and Research Professor (Emeritus) of History at La Trobe University Melbourne. She has written extensively on women’s labour history in both the US and Australia, including *Barmaids: A History of Women’s Work in Pubs*. With Emma Robertson and Lee-Ann Monk she is currently working on an Australian Research Council-funded project on women in non-traditional employment. diane.kirkby@uts.edu.au

Emma Robertson is Senior Lecturer in History at La Trobe University (Bendigo campus) She is the author of *Chocolate, Women and Empire: A Social and Cultural History* (Manchester University Press, 2009) and is continuing to explore the gendered history of chocolate workers in transnational perspective, with a recent article on Cadbury in *Women’s History Review*. In the co-authored book, *Rhythms of Labour: Music at Work in Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), she combined her interests in gender and workplace cultures with the history of music. emma.robertson@latrobe.edu.au

Dr Hannah Loney

Reproducing the Modern Family: The Local Dynamics of Family Planning in New Order Indonesia

This paper aims to shed light on the global politics of reproduction by exploring a key period in which approaches to family planning and population management were being transformed: the decades following World War Two in the so-called “Third World”. Specifically, the paper will examine the Indonesian national family planning program, which was a major social initiative of President Suharto’s New Order regime (1966–98). Beginning in 1970, family planning was a cornerstone of the Indonesian government’s vision for modern families, subjects and bodies as a means to affect national social and economic development. The family planning program was centrally managed by the National Family Planning Coordination Board, but there was significant regional variation in the nature of implementation. This paper will examine the local social and cultural dynamics of family planning in East Timor, a purported Indonesian province from 1975 to 1999. This region experienced a history of invasion, protracted conflict and violent retaliation by the Indonesian state, which produced a legacy of deep mistrust and animosity towards the central government. As such, East Timor presented a distinct context for the implementation and socialisation of New Order state policy. By foregrounding this “marginal space”, I argue that we can better understand the diverse ways in which individual women negotiated the reproductive politics of state planning and its normative assumptions about gender, the body and modernity.

Biography

Hannah Loney is a Gilbert Postdoctoral Early Career Fellow in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne, and a Sessional Lecturer at the Australian Catholic University, Melbourne. Her research interests include women’s history, twentieth-century Southeast Asian and Pacific history, transnational activism, histories of violence, oral history, and international human rights. Hannah’s book, *In Women’s Words: Violence and Everyday Life during the Indonesian Occupation of East Timor, 1975–1999*, was published in 2018 by Sussex Academic Press.

Dr Claire Lowrie

Women's Drinking Habits in the Tropics: Colonialism and Climate Adaptation in Southeast Asia and Northern Australia, 1800s–1930s

From the early nineteenth century up until the 1930s, the notion that the 'white race' could not survive outside of the temperate regions of the world was a commonly held scientific and medical assertion. Those who went to live in tropical regions were warned that they might succumb to disease, physical lassitude and racial degeneration, brought on by climatic conditions. The ability of white women to survive in tropical climates was a source of particular concern in Southeast Asian colonies, such as Malaya and the Philippines, and was especially troubling in Australia's Northern Territory and in Far North Queensland where it seemed the dream of a 'white Australia' might not be realised. Colonial officials and medical practitioners conducted various enquires into the lives of British, Anglo American and white Australian women in these sites and developed detailed recommendations regarding appropriate diet, exercise, attire and daily routines. But to what extent did white women in the tropics follow such advice?

While historians have documented scientific and governmental responses to climate, everyday practices of tropical adaptation in the colonies are not well understood. This paper explores how ideas about managing a hot climate shaped white women's drinking practices in the Philippines, Malaya, Queensland and the Northern Territory from the 1880s to the 1930s. The paper will consider whether women adhered to or contravened medical advice regarding alcohol consumption; the degree to which they embraced drinks produced locally, such as iced pineapple juice; and how attitudes about the revitalising benefits of tea and coffee consumption differed across the colonies. I am interested in how strategies of adaptation were shaped by cultural interactions between migrant women and Indigenous peoples, and, how drinking practices could reinforce or challenge colonial gender hierarchies.

Biography

Claire Lowrie is a Senior Lecturer in history at the University of Wollongong, Australia. Claire works on the history of colonialism in Southeast Asia and northern Australia. She has published her work in *Gender and History*, *Modern Asian Studies*, *Pacific Historical Review*, and the *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*. Her most recent book is *Colonialism and Male Domestic Service across the Asia-Pacific* (Bloomsbury, 2019) co-authored with Julia Martinez, Frances Steel and Victoria Haskins. She is the recipient of current ARC Discovery project grant on Chinese indenture (Martinez, Lowrie and Benton, DP180100695, 2018-2021).

Associate Professor Julia Martínez

'Protecting' Chinese Women in Prostitution in 1880s Darwin

Historian Elizabeth Sinn discusses the aftermath of the 1875 United States prohibition of immigration of Chinese women as prostitutes (2003: 107). What was still legal, if controversial in colonial Hong Kong at the time, was frowned upon in white settler societies. British and American discourse focussed on the protection of Chinese women from apparent slavery, a trope that fuelled anti-immigration sentiment. In Australia it has been understood that there was no similar presence of Chinese women in prostitution. Instead, the Australian press was critical of the alleged evils of Chinese immigration, fearing for the fate of white women in prostitution, not Chinese women. This paper explores an exceptional case, and considers the framing of a small number of Chinese women in prostitution in Darwin during the 1880s, considering the biopolitics of protection which pitched Chinese women against Chinese men. Like British colonial Chinese Protectorates of Singapore and Hong Kong, the Darwin authorities were ambivalent about this notion of the fragile Chinese woman in need of protection. White male commentators were uneasy that Chinese women might harbour strength of body and mind and the prospect of independent Chinese women was not acceptable. This appears to be an isolated period in Australian history. The 1890s saw the rise of an anti-prostitution movement and subsequent the framing of women as wives. As Natalie Fong explains (2018) all prostitutes were to be denied entry to Australia under the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 and for Chinese it was only merchants' wives (and families) who could expect to be granted exemptions, giving rise to a legislative emphasis on 'respectable' married women.

Biography

Julia Martínez is Associate Professor in History at UOW and previously an ARC Future Fellow (2013-2017) researching women's mobility in the Asia Pacific. Her book (with Adrian Vickers) *The Pearl Frontier: Indonesian Labor and Indigenous encounters* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2015) won the 2016 Queensland Literary Award's History prize; the NT History Award; and was shortlisted for the AHA Ernest Scott Prize. She also writes on domestic service with Claire Lowrie in *Gender and History, Pacific Historical Review* and with Lowrie, Steel and Haskins in *Colonialism and Male Domestic Service* (Bloomsbury, 2018).

Dr Petra Mosmann

Corporeal Feminist Archive: Reading Faith Bandler's Gloves as 'Feminist Objects'

Faith Bandler (1918-2015) is primarily remembered in an Australian national context for her role in the 1967 referendum on the position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian constitution. In 1995, when invited by the National Museum of Australia (NMA) to present an object that was symbolic of her political life, she chose to donate a pair of white gloves she wore during the referendum campaign. The NMA identifies Bandler's gloves as a collection highlight, and a key object within the 'Indigenous Civil Rights Collections'. They were recently displayed in 'A Change is Gonna Come', an exhibition narrating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander equal rights movement. This paper argues that Faith Bandler's gloves can be read as anti-racist feminist material culture, and I demonstrate this by using the gloves to think through embodying race, identity and feminism in public memory.

Biography

Petra Mosmann is a lecturer in Women's Studies at Flinders University in South Australia. She completed her thesis in 2018. Titled *Archives of the Australian Second Wave: History and Feminism after the Archival Turn*, she argued that it is crucial feminist historians reflexively engage with the feminist archive. In 2019 her thesis was awarded a Vice Chancellor's Prize for Doctoral Thesis Excellence.

Dr Leigh Straw

'A Gallant Woman':

The Construction of Female Identities in Lillian Armfield's Police Work

Lillian May Armfield was one of the first two women appointed in 1915 to the NSW Police Force, as part of the Women's Police. This was the first of its kind in Australia. Within a decade, Lillian Armfield was working as an unranked detective and was in charge of a small team of special constables as Chief of the NSW Women's Police. By the time Lillian Armfield retired from policing work in 1946, she had found thousands of runaway girls, had been instrumental in the policing crackdowns on underworld violence during the Razor Wars from 1927-1931, and assisted on numerous serious criminal investigations including the infamous 'Pyjama Girl' case. This paper explores the expectations placed on Lillian Armfield as a female police officer working in a male-dominated profession and the manner in which she had to carefully negotiate the policing workplace to ensure there would be a continued commitment to the work of the Women's Police. Lillian Armfield's pioneering police work offers insights into the construction of female identities within the police force and in the policing of criminal women in the early twentieth century. While Lillian Armfield challenged the existing gender order through her work, she also reinforced the status quo by policing to maintain traditional modes of femininity. Through reference to Lillian's major investigations and utilising her personal reflections on her work, this paper reveals the extent to which social constructions of 'good' and 'bad' women impacted on the work of Australia's first female detective.

Biography

Dr Leigh Straw is Arts Coordinator and Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Notre Dame Australia. Leigh is the author of a number of fiction and non-fiction books featuring women's stories, including *Angel of Death: Dulcie Markham, Australia's Most Beautiful Bad Woman* (ABC Books, 2019), *Lillian Armfield: How Australia's First Female Detective Took on Tilly Devine and the Razor Gangs and Changed the Face of the Force* (Hachette, 2018) and *The Worst Woman in Sydney: The Life and Crimes of Kate Leigh* (NewSouth Books 2016).

Alexandra Wallis

Extreme Lactation: Lactational Insanity and the Female Patients at the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum, 1858 – 1908

Lactational insanity was a component of puerperal insanity, or what might be understood today as a form of postnatal depression. The emphasis that nineteenth-century society placed on pregnancy and child-rearing as women's primary function resulted in many anxieties surrounding parturition. However, the focus on the female body, in particular breasts and lactation, as a cause of insanity affected the admissions of some women to the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum from 1858 to 1908. Modern medical professionals are aware of the many factors involved in postnatal depression, though nineteenth-century physicians viewed it as a common issue of mental derangement in women soon after childbirth, however, unlikely to be permanent. Women suffering lactational insanity also challenged the notions of domesticity and femininity, flouting ideals of maternal conduct and feeling: contravening their marital vows, turning against their husbands, neglecting themselves, children, and household. Through the female patient records and case books of the Fremantle Asylum, this paper will explore case studies of the women admitted with lactation insanity. It will reveal nineteenth and early twentieth century anxieties concerning women's bodies and ideals of motherhood and womanhood operating in diagnosis and treatment in colonial Fremantle.

Biography

Alexandra Wallis is a PhD candidate and Sessional Academic at the University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle. Her research focuses on the female patients at the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum 1858 to 1908. She graduated with a BA Hons in History and English from Edith Cowan University in 2014.

Information

Conference sessions and the morning keynote address will take place in the Case Study Room at The University Club of Western Australia (UniClub).

The afternoon keynote address will be held at Alexander Lecture Theatre, Ground Floor Room G57, Arts Building, UWA.

Lunch and Morning and Afternoon Tea will be served in UniClub.

We encourage all delegates to visit the Lawrence Wilson Gallery at lunchtime to view *HERE&NOW19*, which surveys the practice of artists working with fibre and textiles to express ideas relating to current social and political issues.

Dinner starts at 7:00 PM at Little Way, 161 Broadway, Nedlands 6009. It is a 15 minute walk from the UniClub and we will choose a meeting point to walk there together.

The Australian Women's History Network would like to thank:

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Anna Murray (bag and booklet cover designs)

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Wesfarmers Chair of Australian History, Professor Jane Lydon
Em. Hon. Professor Ann Curthoys

