

A forum, co-presented by **Heide Museum of Modern Art** and the **University of Melbourne**, to critically discuss the exhibition Cubism & Australian Art

New Perspectives on Cubism & Australian Art

Monday 29 March 2010

5:30pm – 8pm

Cost FREE (discounted exhibition admission available when booking)

Venue Laby Theatre, David Caro Building, University of Melbourne

Bookings 9850 1500



Robert Rooney
After Colonial Cubism 1993
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Purchased through the Heide Foundation with the
assistance of the Heide Foundation Collectors' Group and the Robert Salzer Fund

Speakers

- Associate Professor Rex Butler, School of English, Media Studies and Art History, University of Queensland
- Dr Ann Stephen, Senior Curator, University of Sydney Art Gallery and Art Collection
- Dr Anthony White, Lecturer, School of Culture & Communication, University of Melbourne
- Sue Cramer and Lesley Harding, Curators, Cubism & Australian Art, Heide Museum of Modern Art

Chaired by Associate Professor Alison Inglis, School of Culture and Communication, University of Melbourne.

Forum: New Perspectives on Cubism and Australian Art

Sue Cramer and Lesley Harding

Curatorial perspectives on Cubism and Australia

Lesley Harding and Sue Cramer will discuss the ever-evolving nature of Cubism as a set of conceptual and philosophical ideas, not just stylistic traits, and its relevance to contemporary times. Specifically, they will trace the anecdotal and surprising influence of Fernand Léger on the work of several Australian artists—Margaret Preston, Sidney Nolan, Leonard French, Ian Burn and Diena Georgetti—and the interactive relationships between past and present discovered through the curatorial project of their exhibition.

Lesley Harding and Sue Cramer are Curators at Heide Museum of Modern Art. They co-curated the exhibition *Cubism & Australian Art* at Heide (24 November 2009 – 8 April 2010) and co-authored a book by the same name published by The Miegunyah Press, an imprint of Melbourne University Publishing, in association with Heide.

Anthony White

Hybrid Cubism: de Maistre, Crowley and Fairweather

This paper examines the work of three artists discussed in the *Cubism & Australian Art* exhibition catalogue: Roy de Maistre, Grace Crowley and Ian Fairweather. The focus will be how each artist drew Cubism into a relation with artistic traditions foreign to it. All three artists changed the course of Cubism by steering it away from the more conservative forms of it practiced in Europe and elsewhere after 1915, returning the style to its original, radical force and/or reinventing it anew.

Anthony White is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne.

Rex Butler

Douglas Cooper, Cubism and Australian Art History

Taking off from a passing reference in the catalogue *Cubism & Australian Art*, this paper explores the life and career of the English/Australian scholar, curator and collector of Cubism: Douglas Cooper. What does Cooper have to tell us about Cubism and Australian Art? Indeed, what does Cooper have to tell us about Australian art altogether? It is possible, this paper argues, that Cubism (or at least the English-speaking reception of it) is an Australian construction?

Rex Butler teaches Art History in the School of English, Media Studies and Art History at the University of Queensland. His most recent book is *Borges' Short Stories: A Reader's Guide* (Continuum, 2010).

Ann Stephen

Just what is it that makes cubism today so different, so appealing?

This paper sketches a cross-generational exchange in the story of international Cubism, shifting attention from the work of its high modernist masters to its followers and appropriators. It focuses on the expatriate artist John Power, who made his '1st cubist picture' in 1926, tracing his work as part of the *Abstraction-Création* group between 1932 and 1936. While he acknowledged that its heroic period was over, Cubism represented for Power 'the very symbol of liberation and the means towards one of the purest aesthetic periods in history'. The paper will look between his work and some contemporary art to examine the continuing appeal for a decorative and yet critical modernism.

Ann Stephen is an art curator and historian. She is the Senior Curator, University Art Gallery and Art Collection, University of Sydney