



## Material Histories: Antipodean Perspectives Draft Programme

Thursday 15 November 2012

- 8.30 am      *Registration/Tea and Coffee*
- 9.00am      Mihi/Welcome
- 9.15am      Keynote address:  
‘Worlds of Possibilities: The Future Terrain of Material Culture Studies’  
Beverly Lemire, University of Alberta
- Chair and respondent: Bronwyn Labrum and audience discussion
- 10.15am     *Morning tea*
- 11.15        Louise Purbrick, title tbc
- Chair and respondent: tbc and audience discussion
- 12.15-1.15   *Lunch*
- 1.15pm      Areta Wilkinson ‘Cultural Practice Now: Considering taonga tuku iho  
(treasures passed on) through a Ngāi Tahu jeweller’s lens’
- Chair and respondent: Claire Regnault and audience discussion
- 2.15pm      Graeme Were, ‘Cultural Restitution in the Digital World: Understanding  
the Relation between Digital Images and Material Histories in Melanesia’
- Chair and respondent: Sean Mallon and audience discussion
- 3.15pm      *Afternoon tea*
- 3.45pm      Kate Hunter and Kirstie Ross, ‘Fresh Feel: Using Objects in a  
history of World War One’
- Chair and respondent: Jock Phillips and audience discussion
- 4.45pm      Fiona McKergow and Kerry Taylor, ‘Te Hao Nui and Beyond’

Chair and respondent: Conal McCarthy and audience discussion

6.30pm *Dinner downtown*

Friday 16 November

9.00am Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins and Georgina White, title tbc

Chair and respondent: tbc and audience discussion

10.00am *Morning tea and shift to Te Papa*

11.00am Exhibition and collection tour at Te Papa

Led by Stephanie Gibson, Lynette Townsend and Michael Fitzgerald,  
History Curators at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

12.30 *Lunch and back to Massey*

1.30 Postgraduate student panel

Hinemoa Hilliard, ‘“Sisters are doing it for themselves”’: The Haeata Collective and the *Karanga Karanga* Exhibition at the City Gallery, 1986’  
Debbie Noon, ‘Changing Patterns of Consumerism: The Rise and Rise of the Second Hand’

Megan Watson, ‘“Of course you had to keep the tins full”’: The material culture of afternoon tea in the Manawatu, 1930s-1950s’

Ryan Brown-Haysom, ‘Mummy mania in New Zealand museums’

Annette O’Sullivan, ‘The changing use and meanings of wool bale stencils in history and contemporary culture’

Dinah Vincent, ‘The meanings of girls’ sewing in the 1950s and 1960s’

Chair and respondent: Marcus Moore and audience discussion

3.00 *Afternoon tea*

3.30 Bronwyn Dalley, ‘Memories of things said and done’

Respondent: Paul Thompson and audience discussion

4.30 Conclusions:

Panel of Beverly Lemire, Louise Purbrick, Graeme Were and Bronwyn Dalley with audience participation, chaired by Bronwyn Labrum

6.00 *Drinks downtown*

## Abstracts and speaker biographies

### Beverly Lemire, 'Worlds of Possibilities: The Future Terrain of Material Culture Studies'

Objects can inspire, induce rapture, or fire passions. Such emotions typically figure in our personal relationships with the things populating our materially complex lives. Our emotions flare with a new piece of clothing, or the recovery of a much-loved object excavated from a cupboard; or flush in frustration (or elation) at encounters with technology. We have complicated relationships with the things that inhabit our lives. Just as dynamic are the developments underway in the academic study of material culture. Objects are now more centre-stage in various disciplinary and interdisciplinary forums than ever before – we ask questions of things and find unexpected answers. More of us, and certainly all of us here today, are engaged in what Chris Gosden describes as ‘an emerging attempt to take the material world seriously in terms of how it affects human relations.’ We grapple to extract meanings from ‘the cluttered rooms of ... memory’. In the next half hour or so I will begin our collective discussion of material culture and consider the possibilities before us, in assessing evidence of cross-cultural contacts, trans-generational heritage and the future of our endeavour; reflecting as well on the distance travelled.

Beverly Lemire is Professor & Henry Marshall Tory Chair, Department of History & Classics and Department of Human Ecology, and Director of the Material Culture Institute, University of Alberta, Canada. A member of the Royal Society of Canada, her publications include *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800*, (1991) *Dress, Culture and Commerce*, (1997), and *The Business of Everyday Life: Gender, Practice and Social Politics in England, c. 1600-1900* (2005). Beverly has worked with collections at major museums in Canada, the US, Portugal, Spain, India and Britain. She has recently completed the book *Cotton* (2011) for Berg Publishers, in the series entitled ‘Textiles that Changed the World’. With Lesley Miller she co-edited *Textile History* (2002-2007), the longest-established international journal on the production, consumption, meanings and conservation of textiles and dress. The history of material culture remains one of her long-standing and continuing interests.

Chair and respondent Bronwyn Labrum teaches in the School of Visual and Material Culture, Massey University. She is the co-editor of *Looking Flash: Clothing in Aotearoa New Zealand* (2007) and *Fragments: New Zealand Social and Cultural History* (2000), and articles and book chapters about museums and material culture, fashion and clothing, and the history of welfare and medicine. She and is currently writing a history of everyday material culture in post-war New Zealand. She is the review editor for History in Other Media for the *Journal of New Zealand History* and an honorary research associate at Te Papa.

**Areta Wilkinson (Ngai Tahu, Kati Mamoe, Waitaha), ‘Cultural Practice Now: Considering taonga tuku iho (treasures passed on) through a Ngāi Tahu jeweller’s lens’**

As a maker of things I am aware I am creating material history for the future and that this material will speak of my cultural perspective at the time. My current jewellery exploration is directly in dialogue with Ngāi Tahu taonga, and Ngāi Tahu cultural values. It is a self-conscious attempt to learn from the contexts I move in, be personally shaped by them, and shape from them. Thus for me material history is not a distancing concept nor a revisionist stance, as a Ngāi Tahu artist my cultural production is a re-enactment, a re-working and re-claiming, that can be understood as part of a vibrant relevant continuum. My contribution to ‘Material Histories: Antipodean Perspectives’ is to offer a makers position speaking of the Now, to reveal collective cultural insights that underpin my current investigations, of which when implemented together form dynamic cultural practice including new artworks. It is my personal aspiration that this critical context remains with my objects as they move into the future, and by considering taonga tuku iho in my methods of inquiry I can perhaps produce something of value to be passed back to the communities I belong to.

The artwork of Areta Wilkinson (Ngāi Tahu) sits between customary or traditional Maori adornment still produced in the present, and the histories and practices of NZ contemporary jewellery. Areta says her practice has developed into a search for ‘a craft methodology relevant to Te Waipounamu, New Zealand.’ Areta’s work is seen in national public galleries and collections such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Auckland Triennial, City Gallery Wellington, Auckland Museum, Dowse Art Museum and Te Papa Tongarewa. Wilkinson has been a lecturer in jeweller at Unitec 1995-2008, and she is now based in North Canterbury pursuing a PhD in Fine Arts through Massey University Te Putahi-a-Toi School of Maori Studies.

Chair and respondent Claire Regnault is Senior Curator of History at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, where she oversees the development of our national Fashion and Textile collection. She is a co-author with Douglas Lloyd Jenkins and Lucy Hammonds of *The Dress Circle: New Zealand Fashion Design Since 1940* (2010).

**Graeme Were, ‘Cultural Restitution in the Digital World: Understanding the Relation between Digital Images and Material Histories in Melanesia’**

The digitisation of museum collections has transformed the way people access and engage with objects. It opens opportunities for a renewed understanding of material histories through the online analysis and interpretation of collections. This presentation examines these issues critically through an analysis of the use and application of 3D digital images of ethnographic objects by Melanesian people. It takes as its focus two collaborative projects set up to support the restoration of cultural knowledge in Melanesia by enabling remote access to 3D digital images. The first project involved the return of a high-resolution 3D digital image of a plank canoe to a community in the Solomon Islands. The other, currently in progress, provides access to 3D images of museum objects for a community in Papua New Guinea using a participatory design methodology. This presentation takes a critical approach to cultural restitution through an analysis of Melanesian people’s perceptions of digital images in relation to those of their material past.

Graeme Were has a PhD in Anthropology and is Convenor of the Museum Studies Postgraduate Programme at the University of Queensland and director of Postgraduate Studies in the School of English, Media Studies and Art History. His recent work includes the monograph *Lines that Connect: Rethinking Pattern and Mind in the Pacific* (2010) and the co-edited volume *Extreme Collecting* (2012: with J C H King).

Chair and respondent Sean Mallon is Senior Curator, Pacific Cultures at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Among recent publications, he is a contributor to *Art in Oceania: A New History* (2012), co-editor of *Tangata o le Moana: New Zealand and People of the Pacific* (2012), and co-editor of *Tatau: Samoan Tattooing* (2010).

### **Kate Hunter and Kirstie Ross, 'Fresh Feel: Using Objects in a history of World War One'**

As the centenary of the Great War approaches, historians of the area and curators face the challenge of bringing fresh perspectives to a conflict that is 'known' in popular and scholarly culture. Over the last two decades, the turn to the social history of the war has resulted in letters and diaries taking centre stage with exciting and fruitful results, but some problems persist: overwhelmingly, the emphasis of research and publication has remained on soldiers' experience; and the New Zealand home front, and the connections between home and theatres of war, have been marginalized. This paper outlines our current project to write a history of New Zealand's war experience through an emphasis on material culture. Our contention is this emphasis will help reveal new understandings of the Great War that are long overdue. Our approach aims to broaden the view of who New Zealanders at war were, what they treasured and why. We investigate the importance of objects in maintaining individual, family and sometimes community identities in a conflict that was global and globalising, as well as impersonal and industrial. We examine how the circumstances of production, purchase, giving and receiving could imbue ordinary objects with extraordinary meaning. This paper also discusses the methodological challenges of producing such a book, especially the issue of objects we know have not survived and how to bring them to life in the two dimensions of the page.

Kate Hunter teaches in the History Programme at Victoria University and is an honorary research associate at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. She is the author of *Hunting: A New Zealand History* (2009) and *Father's Right-Hand Man: Women on Australia's Family Farms, 1880s to the 1920s* (2004). Kirstie Ross is Curator, History at Te Papa, where she was the lead curator on *Slice of Heaven: 20th Century Aotearoa*. She has also published *Going Bush: New Zealanders and Nature in the Twentieth Century* (2008).

Chair and respondent tbc

### **Fiona McKergow and Kerry Taylor, 'Te Hao Nui and Beyond'**

Te Hao Nui - The Great Catch: Object Stories from Te Manawa features forty objects from the collections of Te Manawa Museum of Art, Science and History, Palmerston North. In this paper we discuss how we made our selection from roughly 45,000 items, and how the history of the region is reflected in our choices. We look at where this book

has led us in the year since its publication, and ask how material approaches can be used to produce different kinds of regional history.

Fiona Mckergow is an independent historian, a former social history curator at The Science Centre & Manawatu Museum, and co-editor of *Looking Flash: Clothing in Aotearoa New Zealand* (2007). Kerry Taylor is Senior Lecturer and Head of the School of Humanities, Massey University, Palmerston North, and co-editor of *Culture and the Labour Movement* (1991) and *On the Left: Essays on Socialism in New Zealand* (2002).

Chair and respondent Conal McCarthy is Director of the Museum and Heritage Studies Programme at Victoria University. He is the author of *Exhibiting Māori: A History of Colonial Cultures of Display*, (2007) and *Museums and Maori: Heritage Professionals, Indigenous Collections, Current Practice* (2011).

### **Postgraduate panel**

Information to come

### **Douglas Lloyd Jenkins and Georgina White, tbc**

Chair and discussant tbc

### **Bronwyn Dalley, 'Memories of things said and done'**

The past is alive and well in contemporary New Zealand culture. From retro to cookery shows, granny-hunting to granny-chic, Friends Reunited to Antiques Roadshow, there is a vast appetite for the personal and the material. In this paper I explore some of the diverse ways that New Zealanders engage with the personal and material past in both real and digital worlds. I also consider some of the reasons for this. The paper is part of a broader and ongoing study of public use of history.

Bronwyn Dalley is a freelance historian. Formerly the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Historian at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, where she contributed to nzhistory.net, anzac.govt.nz and Te Ara, the online encyclopedia of New Zealand. She is also the co-editor of *Frontier of Dreams: The Story of New Zealand* (2006), *Past Judgement: Social Policy in New Zealand* (2004) and *Going Public: The Changing Face of New Zealand History* (2001) and author of *Living in the Twentieth Century* (2000) and *Family Matters: Child Welfare in Twentieth Century New Zealand* (1998).

Chair and respondent Paul Thompson is Experience Manager at the Wellington Museums Trust. A former curator, he is also a photographer and author of *The Colour of Water (or, a circumnavigation in three matches* (2011), *Shards of Silver* (2006), and *New Zealand: A Century of Images* (1998).