

Tropics of the Imagination



PROGRAMME

Tropics of the Imagination Conference
Thursday 17th September 2015
The Cairns Institute, James Cook University
McGregor Road, Smithfield, QLD. 4878.

**A multidisciplinary conference on imaginative and creative
approaches to culture and nature in the tropics**

Presented by
The Cairns Institute in association with
The College of Arts, Society and Education
James Cook University

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Tropics of the Imagination



Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the fifth Tropics of the Imagination Conference.

The conference has been running biennially since 2009, and it is with great satisfaction that we acknowledge some presenters here from our first and later conferences. Welcome also to those of you new to this conference, and especially to delegates who have come from beyond James Cook University, whether locally or interstate.

We have a very interesting range of papers, and quite a diversity of subject matter. It wasn't easy grouping papers into sessions with shared themes, so I have allowed for 5 minute breaks between papers for those of you who might want to move around from session to session.

As in the past, we will be publishing the proceedings of the conference (a call for re-submission of papers will go out to you soon) so if you miss attending a particular paper you will at least be able to read it later.

As well as our keynote address by distinguished Professor Peter Murphy, and the 27 papers, please remember the two events associated with the conference: the free screening of films by indigenous women, Solid Film Festival, on Wednesday 16th September, 6pm, Room D3:054, in The Cairns Institute, and post-conference drinks and canapés followed by the gallery opening of Gapuwiyak Calling: phone-made media from Arnhem Land from 5pm Thursday 17th September, also at the Cairns Institute.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Stewart Lockie, Director of the Cairns Institute, for supporting this conference today and in the past, and similarly, Professor Nola Alloway, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the College of Arts, Education and Society. My personal thanks also go especially to Jennifer McHugh, Project Officer at the Cairns Institute, for her inspired skills in organizing this and other conferences, and to JCU graduates, Claudia Pollard and Maureen Healey for looking after delegates and the Registration desk.

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Tropics of the Imagination 2015 Programme

Cairns Institute, Room D3.054		
9:00 – 9:30		
<p>Dr David Hudson, Acknowledgement to Country Professor Stewart Lockie, Director Cairns Institute, Opening</p>		
9:30 – 10:30		
<p>Keynote Address Professor Peter Murphy Imagination and Creativity in the Tropics</p>		
10:30 – 10:50 Morning Tea (Foyer)		
Cairns Institute, Rm D3.054	Cairns Institute, Rm D3.059	Cairns Institute, Rm D3.063
10:50 – 11:20 Panel Session 1	10:50 – 11:20 Session 2A	10:50 – 11:20 Session 3A
<p>Ute Haring, Helen Ramoutsaki, Chrystopher Spicer, Reesa Sorin The Cyclone as Manifestation of the Tropical Environment/Ecology</p>	<p>Eduardo de la Fuente Contemporary Landscape Theory and the Tropics: Notes for a Phenomenological-Material Account of 'Lushness'</p>	<p>Allison Craven Horizons, Region and Place in Films about Australians Abroad in Asia</p>
11:25 – 11:55 Panel Session 1 Cont.	11:25 – 11:55 Session 2B	11:25 – 11:55 Session 3B
	<p>Michael Davis Entangled Tropical Knowledges: Towards a Poetics of Knowledge and Place-Making in Nineteenth Century Voyaging Narratives</p>	<p>Janet Marles "Kisah-Kisah dalam Kenangan / Stories through Memories": An Oral History Project Collecting Personal Stories of Those Who Lived through World War II in Brunei Darussalam (1941 -1945)</p>
12:00 – 12:30 Panel Session 1 Cont.	12:00 – 12:30 Session 2C	12:00 – 12:30 Session 3C
	<p>Janet Liu Terry Hiraeth of the Third Culture Adult: Displacement and Identity</p>	<p>Jocene Vallack Doing Theatre as Research: A Mysterious Mix</p>
12:30 – 1:20 Lunch (Foyer)		

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Cairns Institute, Rm D3.054	Cairns Institute, Rm D3.059	Cairns Institute, Rm D3.063
<p align="center">1:20 – 1:50 Session 4A</p> <p align="center">Deb Anderson Bated Breath: Living with Cyclone in a Climate-Change World</p>	<p align="center">1:20 – 1:50 Session 5A</p> <p align="center">Richard Lansdown “Think I shall like these tropics”: D. H. Lawrence and Edward, Prince of Wales, in Sri Lanka in 1922’</p>	<p align="center">1:20 – 1:50 Session 6A</p> <p align="center">Robyn Glade-Wright Tidelines: Creative Vision, Ecology and the Tropics.</p>
<p align="center">1:55 – 2:25 Session 4B</p> <p align="center">Chrystopher Spicer “Big wind, he waiting there.” Vance Palmer’s Cyclones of Apocalypse and Their Power of Revelation.</p>	<p align="center">1:55 – 2:25 Session 5B</p> <p align="center">Jessica McKechnie The Poetry of the Quantum Imagination and the Classical Universe</p>	<p align="center">1:55 – 2:25 Session 6B</p> <p align="center">Laurel McKenzie Women in Unity: Re-Imaging the Female Body in Art</p>
<p align="center">2:30 – 3:00 Session 4C</p> <p align="center">Hazel Menehira “What Is It with Poets and Beaches?” A Personal Perspective.</p>	<p align="center">2:30 – 3:00 Session 5C</p> <p align="center">Amy Forbes Covering the Creative Journalist: Authenticity and Agency in Today's Newsrooms</p>	<p align="center">2:30 – 3:00 Session 6C</p> <p align="center">Karen Argus A Pathway to Truth about Self</p>
<p>3:00 – 3:20 Afternoon Tea (Foyer)</p>		

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Cairns Institute, Rm D3.054	Cairns Institute, Rm D3.059	Cairns Institute, Rm D3.063
3:20 – 3:50 Session 7A Carol Libke New Pioneers Cairns: A Lasting Legacy 1950 - 2000	3:20 – 3:50 Session 8A Jennifer Deger Bark TV, Portrait of an Innovator	3:20 – 3:50 Session 9A Barbara Cheshire and Ryan Daniel Spirituality in Place: Capturing the Essence of North Queensland through Painting
3:55 – 4:25 Session 7B Pauline Sherlock The Tyrannies of Distance: From Cairns to the Melbourne International Comedy Festival.	3:55 – 4:25 Session 8B Bobbie Ruben Reconfigured Connections: Indigenous Textiles from Remote Communities across Northern Australia	3:55 – 4:25 Session 9B Angela Meyer Placemaking or Dasein?
4:30 – 5:00 Session 7C Chris Wighton Legless and all at sea on the Great Barrier Reef	4:30 – 5:00 Session 8C Gavin Singleton Re-Asserting Native Title and Other Mechanisms through Economic Development Opportunities	4:30 – 5:00 Session 9C Glistening Deepwater ‘How can we participate in a culture which inspires humans to responsibly steward the planet for future generations of all beings?’
Cairns Institute Foyer		
5:00 pm		
Drinks and Canapés		
6:00 pm		
<i>Gapuwiyak Calling: Phone-Made Media from Arnhem Land</i>		

Tropics of the Imagination Conference Papers

Abstracts and Biographies of Contributors

Author: Deb Anderson

Title: Bated Breath: Living with Cyclone in a Climate-Change World

Session 4A: 1:20 – 1:50, Rm D3.054

Abstract: Research shows once climate change “becomes something people can feel, see, or experience close to home”, it becomes all the more meaningful ⁽¹⁾. In that vein, this paper explores the experience of ‘extreme’ weather in the Wet Tropics in a bid to generate new knowledge on the core interpretive problems of climate change. A pilot study is under way in Far North Queensland to record, contextualise, interpret and represent oral histories of tropical cyclone. So far, the project has focused on living memories of ‘lost places’⁽²⁾, notably in the aftermath of Cyclone Yasi (2011) and Cyclone Larry (2006). While mapping the environmental, political and economic forces shaping the apprehension of cyclone, this study argues for the significance of the cultural and historical dimensions of climate. Indeed, it explores how both a constructive and imaginative engagement with climate might extend the national climate conversation—‘beyond’ the belief politics, which shroud the science.

(1) Sally Bingham, “Climate Change: A Moral Issue,” *Creating a Climate for Change: Communicating Climate Change and Facilitating Social Change*, eds Susanne Moser and Lisa Dilling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 163.

(2) Peter Read, *Returning to Nothing: Learning from Lost Places* (Melbourne: Cambridge UP, 1996).

Bio: Deb Anderson’s fascination with storytelling and climate likely stems from having grown up in the Wet Tropics, on the Atherton Tablelands. She spent a decade writing for *The Age* newspaper before joining Monash University as a lecturer. In her research, she has recorded oral histories for Museum Victoria on extreme weather and shifting perceptions of climate in southeast Australia, culminating in her first book, *Endurance: Australian Stories of Drought* (CSIRO Publishing, 2014). Her latest project on cyclone brings her home to the Far North.

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Author: Karen Argus

Title: A Pathway to Truth about Self

Session 6C: 2:30 – 3:00 Rm D3.063

Abstract: Utilising aspects of early years teaching and visual arts identities on the pathway to understanding self, this research is expressed through picturebook text and visual arts and culminates in a 2017 exhibition at The Tanks. Combining creative responses with professional understandings as well as experiences and learnings from childhood through to adulthood, a questioning of where and why aspects have gained importance and/or dominance has become prevalent when considering the

social frameworks one works within and around. Working towards an improved understanding of self, the artworks utilize varying semiotic approaches, each contributing an aspect of self in the telling of the story. The work has a Far North feel being a multi-voiced story with unexpected sympathies.

Bio: Karen Argus has been an early childhood literacy and art teacher for over 15 years and has worked as a classroom teacher, literacy coach, learning advisor and learning support teacher in the state, private and tertiary education systems. She is currently undertaking a Master of Philosophy (Creative Arts) (Res) under the supervision of Prof Ryan Daniel and Dr Allison Craven and is mentored by artist Julie Rees. Her research around self, combines a mash of semiotic genres and sees Karen entering the visual arts field. Karen also volunteers her time as a graphic designer for the Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA).

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Author: Barbara Cheshire and Ryan Daniel

Title: Spirituality in Place: Capturing the Essence of North Queensland through Painting

Session 9A: 3:20 – 3:50, Rm D3.063

Abstract: For centuries, artists have been inspired by place. This perception and awareness of place can also involve a spiritual connection. For centuries, artists from both Aboriginal culture and white settlement in Australia have painted works which reveal a deep spiritual connection to place. One of the geographical areas that has inspired several artists is North Queensland, which offers a rich tapestry of dry and wet tropical environments. This article therefore considers an historical overview and deconstructs the work of four contemporary painters (Firth-Smith, Silver, Watson and Cheshire) who have been inspired by the place that is North Queensland, in order to consider the ways in which their work reveals a spiritual connection to place.

Bio: Dr Barbara Cheshire (College of Arts, Society and Education, James Cook University) is a visual artist and arts educator. Her PhD and Masters research both focused on the visual language of Christian spirituality. Over the course of Barbara's life she has considered the recognition of a complete human experience; the marriage of the physical and spiritual connection through various cultural symbolic methodologies. Barbara's practice has slowly shifted to an experiential encoding which has opened up a very different form of visual communication.

Professor Ryan Daniel (College of Arts, Society and Education James Cook University) is a senior researcher in creative arts and creative industries at James Cook University, Australia. His research is published in *Creative Industries*,

International Journal of Cultural Policy, Arts and Humanities in Higher Education, CoDesign, Music Education Research and the British Journal of Music Education.

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Author: Allison Craven

Title: Horizons, Region and Place in Films about Australians Abroad in Asia

Session 3A: 10:50 – 11:20, Rm D3.063

Abstract: This paper concerns two Australian films made or partly made overseas. One, *The Waiting City* (McCarthy 2009) was shot entirely in India, and *Wish You Were Here* (Darcy-Smith 2012) partly in Cambodia. In one sense, the paper is concerned with the idea of ‘region’ as a construction in Asian/Australian encounters, which is suggested by the offshore production histories. These films figure the growing internationalisation of Australian cinema, yet the stories told are essentially of personal experiences of the subjects, and portrayed within what might be seen as imperial parameters. The films do not reflect explicitly on the larger questions of Australian-Asian relations, in spite of the production histories that are based in cross-cultural alliances and interactions. Both the productions and the narrative fictions will be discussed in this paper, and framed within Jane Mills’s (2014) theory of sojourner cinema.

Bio: Allison Craven is a Senior Lecturer in English and Screen Studies in the College of Arts, Society and Education at James Cook University. She has published on Disney media, gender and globalisation, Australian cinema, and children’s literature in education.

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Author: Michael Davis

Title: Entangled Tropical Knowledges: Towards a Poetics of Knowledge and Place-Making in Nineteenth Century Voyaging Narratives

Session 2B: 11:25 – 11:55, Rm D3.059

Abstract: Footsteps mark the land as people walk through the north eastern Queensland tropics. Here, in the mid-1800s, botanical explorers from the survey ship HMS Rattlesnake scour their newly encountered environment for species that will be sent as specimens to the growing collections in London. Local Aboriginal people walk with them, perhaps as guides, possibly interpreters. The narratives for this voyage refer to some individual Aboriginal people who accompanied the Europeans as cotaiga, companion – a word from one of the Cape York Peninsula languages. Meetings and encounters between these voyagers and the local people take place

around conversations and communications concerning local environmental knowledge. In this paper I look more closely at these 'knowledge encounters', to consider the complex poetics of entanglements between local Indigenous knowledges and Western modes of knowledge and representations of the local environment. Interrogating the voyaging narratives for their depictions of these encounters-in-place, my paper will meditate upon philosophies of movement, of walking and being in place, and of place making in the tropics. The paper will also ask questions about the role of historical representations of entangled tropical knowledge formations in present day concerns about climate and environmental change.

Bio: Michael Davis has a strong interest in histories of encounter and the role of environment and environmental knowledge in these. He is an independent writer and historian, and an Honorary Research Fellow with the Sydney Environment Institute, The University of Sydney.

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Author: Glistening Deepwater

Title: 'How can we participate in a culture which inspires humans to responsibly steward the planet for future generations of all beings?'

Session 9C: 4:30 – 5:00, Rm D3.063

Abstract: As the tropics of planet earth are home to a rich profusion of diverse and unique life forms, so the tropics of the imagination are the fertile centre from which springs an infinite diversity of unique thought forms. This resource of inspiration and innovation has been a vital fuel in the evolution of human culture to date. At this time, on the bridge between the juggernaut of history and an uncertain future, imaginative contributions to the ongoing quality of life on earth, for all biological life-forms, is undeniably necessary. This paper sets out to explore international and local trends toward a culture of bio-regional, and by extension, planetary ecological protection, where biodiversity and life-viability are recognised as keys to our future. Proposing that by creatively combining our expertise and resources, creative artists and scientists can work toward supporting cultural change.

Bio: Glistening Deepwater is a second year Creative Industries student at JCU Cairns, with a background in metaphysics and holistic systems thinking.

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Author: Jennifer Deger

Title: Bark TV, Portrait of an Innovator

Session 8A: 3:20 – 3:50, Rm D3.059

Abstract: In his book, *Multiple Arts*, Jean-Luc Nancy describes the portrait as "first and foremost an encounter", though in fact, as Nancy clearly appreciates, the art of

portraiture places multiple encounters into play, the most obvious being that between the viewer and the subject of the artwork, an experience often charged with an unnerving immediacy. Yet all portraits await viewers already imprinted with the echo of encounter. This presentation is an attempt to flesh out the possibilities of encounter engendered by a mixed-media artwork that my Yolngu collaborators and I labelled *Djalkiri #1*, but nicknamed the bark TV. I present it here with conflicting impulses. Claiming *Djalkiri #1* as portrait feels immediately constraining, if not downright colonising. If, as art historian Marcia Pointon argues, portraiture is one of the “great defining metaphors of Western culture”, then why impose the category at all? What will be obscured, obliterated even, in the process? What might be gained?

Bio: Associate Professor Jennifer Deger works collaboratively with Yolngu in Australia's northeast Arnhem Land developing new forms of practice-led and collaborative anthropology. She has published widely on Aboriginal visual culture, experimental ethnography, the anthropology of art and indigenous aesthetics, including her book *Shimmering Screens: Making Media in an Aboriginal Community* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006). Her creative work includes the documentary films *Manapanmirr, in Christmas Spirit* (2012) and *Ringtone* (2014), video artworks *My Red Yolngu Heart* (2011) and *Christmas with Wawa* (2008), and the exhibition projects *interventions: experiments between art and ethnography* (2009), *Christmas Birrimbirr (Christmas Spirit)* (2011), and *Gapuwiyak Calling: Phone-Made Media from Arnhem Land* (2014). Jennifer is a Tropical Leader at the Cairns Institute, James Cook University.

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Author: Eduardo de la Fuente

Title: Contemporary Landscape Theory and the Tropics: Notes for a Phenomenological-Material Account of ‘Lushness’

Session 2A: 10:50 – 11:20, Rm D3.059

Abstract: Recent developments in landscape studies and associated fields of research (e.g., cultural geography, place-theory and material culture studies) have been gesturing towards a ‘non-representational’ account of landscape. Central to such literatures is an attempt to move away from the notion that the landscape is some kind of *tabula rasa* upon which culture inscribes images and iconography, narratives and representations. Whether influenced by Latour’s Actor Network Theory, landscape phenomenology, Bachelardean accounts of substances, or the anthropology and sociology of the senses, this line of thinking posits that landscapes are places where we ‘dwell’, engage in a variety of practical activities and which offer their own distinctive ‘affordances’ or agential affects. What might this theoretical development mean for sociocultural studies of the tropics? In this paper, I contend that a phenomenological-material account of tropical phenomena can profitably be focused on a quality we might term ‘lushness’*. Lushness involves an excessive, if not decadent, amount of something; and tends to suggest voluptuousness, fecundity, density, vividness, an object or ambience that arouses the senses, as well as the sensation of feeling refreshed. Tropical lushness ‘affords’ various embodied activities from lying on the

sand to immersing oneself in water or the taking of cover under dense canopies. Tropical landscapes encourage outdoor-ness and often blur the boundary between inside and outside. In considering the phenomenological-cum-material qualities of the lush, I reflect on four instances: tropical landscaping of gardens and public spaces; the geography and affordances associated with tropical waterfalls; buildings and other structures that take on a 'ruinous' state due to tropical conditions; and the social and culinary life of tropical fruit (e.g., lychees, bananas, mangos, durians, and paw-paws). Drawing on such cases, I will suggest that tropical lushness involves a spectrum of aesthetic and material possibilities ranging from the cultivated to the supposedly 'wild', and that discerning the boundary between the cultural and the natural – in the case of tropical lushness – is no straightforward matter.

*NB: I would like to acknowledge that the concept of tropical lush was suggested by Warwick Powell, during the early stages of joint research we are undertaking into the sociocultural and experiential dimensions of Townsville's highly successful waterfront parklands, The Strand. Needless to say I don't hold him responsible for my elaboration of the concept here.

Bio: Eduardo de la Fuente recently took up the position of Senior Lecturer in Creativity and Innovation in the Arts and Creative Media Academic Group at James Cook University. He has degrees in economics and politics, a PhD in cultural and media policy, and has previously held academic positions in sociology and communications programs in the University of Tasmania, Macquarie University, Monash University and Flinders University. His new position entails heading up a new undergraduate and MBA program in creativity and innovation studies that cuts across the fields of creative arts and business. He has previously published books and articles on the avant-garde or R&D end of modern musical culture; the entanglements of art and economy in the age of aesthetic capitalism; and recently coined the term 'socio-aesthetics' to describe the role that aesthetic patterns play in society, culture, economy and everyday life. He hopes that coining a new concept will increase his citation rates or, at the very least, help him to organize his own thoughts. Eduardo is currently engaged in a study of the trend towards ultra-modern or minimalist styles in skyscraper, apartment, hotel and restaurant design; and was recently commissioned by the Sydney firm Luxperience to undertake research on new understandings of luxury in an age of hyper-minimalism and 'cool hotels'. He is also beginning a research project with Professor Adrian Franklin (UTas), Dr Kate Booth (UTas) and Dr Michael Walsh (UoC) that will examine how art plus music (including festivals and performances) have been successfully combined at the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Hobart. Eduardo is Treasurer of the International Sociological Association's Research Committee for the Sociology of the Arts (ISA RC37) and a permanent Faculty Fellow at the Yale Centre for Cultural Sociology.

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Author: Amy Forbes

Title: Covering the Creative Journalist: Authenticity and Agency in Today's Newsrooms

Session 5C: 2:30 – 3:00, Rm D3.059

Abstract: The notion of the authentic journalist is one who gathers the “truth” and then spreads it far and wide to a grateful public. The act of ‘gathering’ implies little or no creativity, and the very notion of newsgathering as invisible, mechanical work has been celebrated by the profession. There is no room for ‘manufacturing news’ or ‘creating news’ in the sense of ‘making things up.’ Today’s convergent media environment where journalists are expected to produce three times as much copy as those working 25 years ago (Davies, 2008) pushes them into a work environment of “predictability, efficiency, calculability and piece-work” (Markham, 2012). The journalist's work is the result of conditions and constraints imposed by normative, philosophical and political conceptions of journalistic agency. Where then does creativity come in? Compound the issue with the growing trend of citizen journalism where consumers become the journalist and authenticity becomes another layer masking the creator.

Bio: Dr Amy Forbes is Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching, and senior lecturer in multimedia journalism at James Cook University. She is also a journalist who has worked across television, print and online platforms. She received a 2014 Office for Learning & Teaching award for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning for leadership and excellence in developing and delivering a pioneering WIL-based curriculum in Multimedia Journalism at JCU.

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Author: Robyn Glade-Wright

Title: Tidelines: Creative Vision, Ecology and the Tropics.

Session 6A: 1:20 – 1:50, Rm D3.063

Abstract: On a sunny, calm day, waves in the tropics wash ashore plastic bottles, discarded thongs and sparkling red shards from broken car tail lights along the tideline. The appeal of the tropics, imagined as a pristine paradise replete with verdant exotic plants and animals, belies the impact of human activity on the region. Works of art, however, can reveal this ecological change, offering viewers new ways of comprehending our place in the tropics. The capacity of artists to address these changes in a way that generates reflective understanding is examined in this presentation. Both the author’s works of art and those of other artists in the tropical region are analysed in terms of their aesthetic properties. These findings may assist artists who endeavour to present new ways of imaging change in the ecology of the tropics.

Bio: Robyn Glade-Wright is an artist and arts educator. Glade-Wright's research interests include imaginative significance, beauty and the visual communication of her concerns about vulnerable species and the loss of species due to extinction.

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Author: Ute Haring, Helen Ramoutsaki, Chrystopher Spicer, Reesa Sorin

Title: The Cyclone as Manifestation of the Tropical Environment/Ecology

Panel Session 1: 10:50 – 12:30, Rm D3.054

Abstract: Cyclones have considerable impact on the human world. Yet, as Ingold (2011) notes, we inhabit a world where the landscape is not separate from “the medium that we call weather – in sunshine, rain, wind and so on” (130). Within this ‘weather-world’, there is a “dynamic interplay across the permeable interface between the medium and the substances with which it comes into contact” (Ibid).

With the cyclone as medium, three researchers from diverse disciplines explore the impact of cyclones on life in Queensland's Wet Tropics. Haring interprets the impact of cyclones on children's wellbeing, as expressed in their drawings and narratives; Ramoutsaki experiments with poetic dialogue in the voices of both cyclone and humans; and Spicer investigates Queensland literature to establish the continuity of cyclone as a metaphor of place and culture. With Sorin moderating, this is an interactive panel exploring the construction, destruction and re-construction of the cyclonic ‘weather world’.

Bio: Ute Haring is a doctoral candidate in Education, examining children's drawings from disasters. She holds a Graduate Certificate in Research Methods (GCRM), as well as degrees in Education, Art and Psychology, and taught for many years in Germany, Papua New Guinea and Australia. While undertaking the GCRM, Ute developed the Content-Interpretive-Developmental (CID) method for interpreting children's drawings. Her current research focuses on children's drawings from the Holocaust, Queensland cyclones and Child Abuse.

Helen Ramoutsaki's creative practice-led research centres on her work as a performing poet, storyteller and scriptwriter. As a long-term resident of Queensland's Wet Tropics, she explores connections within the human and more-than-human environments of the area, interpreting lived experience through performed poetry, narrative and photographic images. Helen is composing a series of performances under the title *Wet: An Appetite for the Tropics*, with scripts for varied audiences and locations developed through the JUTE Theatre's Enter Stage Write program. Her doctoral research project is being supervised by Professor Stephen Torre of James Cook University in Cairns.

Chrystopher Spicer is the author of books on Australian history and film history, including *Duchess: The Story of the Windsor Hotel*, *Great Australian World Firsts*, and *Clark Gable: Biography*, and a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*. Chrystopher currently lectures and tutors creative and academic writing at James Cook University. In his PhD research, he is investigating cyclones as a trope in Queensland literature. In a physical landscape impacted by some 207 tropical cyclones since 1858,

Queensland writers have attempted to incorporate the terror and the sublime of the cyclone into their sense of place. As they have attempted to find context for the unpredictable, chaotic and destructive tropical cyclone, the cyclone has become a defining symbol of both the physical and literary Queensland. Some Queensland writers have perceived within cyclones the Burkean sublime or personal revelation, while others have seen it as motivation for community strength, co-operation and compassion. For some, the cyclone is divine retribution but to others, such as Vance Palmer, it's an apocalyptic event revealing a rare second chance for revelation and renewal.

Reesa Sorin is Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education and Arts Education at James Cook University and a practicing visual artist. Her exhibitions include "Stranger to the Tropics", a series of paintings exploring her move from a sub-arctic climate to the tropical climate of far north Queensland. Her research includes: the role of the arts in learning, teaching and research; how the arts can be utilised to glean and enhance children's understanding of the environment; conceptualisations of childhood; and dogs in the learning environment.

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Author: Richard Lansdown

Title: "'Think I shall like these tropics": D. H. Lawrence and Edward, Prince of Wales, in Sri Lanka in 1922'

Session 5A: 1:20 – 1:50, Rm D3.059

Abstract: The English novelist D. H. Lawrence spent only six weeks on land in the tropics, at Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in March and April of 1922, before travelling on to Australia and, ultimately, to America. In Kandy he was the house guest of an American painter and enthusiast of Buddhism, Earl Brewster, and his wife Achshah, who were both eager that he should partake of the island and its religion. In the event, Lawrence took to neither; but his trip happened to coincide with a state visit from the Prince of Wales, the future ill-starred Edward VIII, on a far grander tour of India and the East that would end in Japan. Lawrence had views on the future monarch, and monarchy at large, brought out by seeing Edward in attendance at the Perahera festival at the Temple of the Tooth. So ideas religious and political did get aired in a tropical surrounding.

Bio: Richard Lansdown is Associate Professor of English in the College of Arts, Education and Society at James Cook University and has taught at the Cairns Campus since 1997. He is the author of *Byron's Historical Dramas*, *The Autonomy of Literature*, *Strangers in the South Seas: The Idea of the Pacific in Western*

Thought, and *The Cambridge Introduction to Byron*. He edited Henry James' *The Bostonians* for Penguin Classics, and the *Critical Review* between 1993 and 2002. His most recent publication is a new selection of Byron's letters and journals for Oxford University Press. He is currently working on an anthology of the writings of John Ruskin, also for Oxford University Press.

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Author: Carol Libke

Title: New Pioneers Cairns: A Lasting Legacy 1950 - 2000

Session 7A: 3:20 – 3:50, Rm 3.054

Abstract: This paper will answer the question, Cairns: Who are we? Where did we come from? Who are the visionaries and organisations that contributed to our growth from small remote 1950s Sugar town to vibrant multicultural city? The paper will clarify: what makes Cairns different from other places in Australia; what environmental challenges we face from heat, wet seasons and cyclones; how new settlers cope in a strange new land; how we educate and entertain ourselves; the struggle for equality by members of the Aboriginal Advancement League; how the Cairns International airport was the catalyst for change. The data I have collected from interviews and research will inform this paper and engage, enlighten and educate those who would like to know more about local history.

Bio: Carol Libke completed a Bachelor of Journalism at JCU Cairns in 2006. Her passion for local history began when she was commissioned to write: *'Our Club': The History of Ellis Beach SLSC 1957-2007*, published in 2007. Her short stories are published in six Tropical Writers anthologies and she is a regular contributor to ABC Open Online. Carol's play *Angus* was short-listed for the Short & Sweet Festival in Brisbane and Sydney in 2009 and her story: "Patrolling the Far North" appeared on ABC television in August 2014. Carol is a long-term member of the Tropical Writers group and served as its President from 2010 – 2013. She has been involved in the Cairns Tropical Writers Festival since its inception in 2008. In 2012, during the National Year of Reading, Carol was engaged to run children's writing workshops for the Cairns Regional Council. In 2013, she coordinated Brisbane Writers Festival events, staged in Cairns. Carol is currently Liaison Officer for the Queensland Writers Centre and has received a Concept Development and Regional Arts Development Grant to collate this research into a book.

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Author: Janet Marles

Title: "Kisah-Kisah dalam Kenangan / Stories through Memories": An Oral History Project Collecting Personal Stories of Those Who Lived through World War II in Brunei Darussalam (1941 -1945)

Session 3B: 11:25 – 11:55, D3.063

Abstract: “Kisah-Kisah dalam Kenangan / Stories through Memories” explores local Bruneian experiences of WWII particularly the last weeks of fighting between Japanese occupying forces, Bruneian locals and the Australian Armed Forces. WWII historians tend to overlook Brunei Darussalam because there were other sites on the island of Borneo with more intense fighting and POW horrors, such as the “Sandakan Death March”. However, almost four years of occupation under the Japanese military had a profound affect on Bruneians and their liberators. Our oral history interviews are bringing these stories to light, including those of a Bruneian teenager who joined to fight with the Japanese army; a leader of the Iban people, better known as Borneo’s head-hunters, whose family used tradition blowpipe and machete to take the heads of Japanese soldiers; a Chinese girl whose family escaped from Taiwan only to be occupied again in Brunei; a son who witnessed his father’s imprisonment and persecution by the Japanese occupiers, and who grew up to become the Bruneian Ambassador to Japan; a boy who, with his father, helped the Sultan of Brunei and his family escape from the Japanese occupiers. Along with the multilingual oral history interviews transcribed and translated into English and Malay, our team have produced high quality photographs and video recordings of the interviewees. These contemporary images in addition to historical images sourced through archives and the interviewees themselves add further texture and uniqueness to the project. See <http://portfolio.janetmarles.com>

Bio: Dr. Janet Marles gained her Ph.D. from Griffith University, Australia and is currently Senior Lecturer in Photomedia at James Cook University. She has worked as a Senior Lecturer in the United Arab Emirates and in Brunei Darussalam, where she continues her research leading a team of local graduate students and translators recording the multilingual locals’ WWII experiences of; occupation, liberation, and the subsequent return of the absolute monarchy. For more details please see <http://www.janetmarles.com>

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Author: Jessica McKechnie

Title: The Poetry of the Quantum Imagination and the Classical Universe

Session 5B: 1:55 – 2:25 , Rm D3.059

Abstract: This paper provides a literary analysis of selected sonnets from my collection titled *Land Mountain* and poems from a subsequent series titled *Creatures*. *Land Mountain* was an attempt to allow a degree of distance for objective interpretation of our environment. The poetry of *Creatures* considers metaphors of simple and complex aspects of environment and the universe at large and sparks the imagination to unite the everyday life of people with the natural world. Furthermore, the theoretical physics of the past century has ventured to unite the microscopic with the macroscopic, the classical world with the quantum world, in a single unifying theory of everything. Just like the physical science, the poetry of discussion ventures to unite the simple with the complex, mimesis with reality, the sublime with the beautiful, and theoretical knowledge with the imagination.

Bio: Jessica McKechnie is an emerging Cairns poet. She is the 2014 inaugural winner of the Nakata Brophy Short Fiction and Poetry Prize for Young Indigenous Writers. This prestigious prize is held by Trinity College, the University of Melbourne. Her poetry has been published in *Overland Literary Journal* as well as online by Trinity College. Jessica has edited for James Cook University's Literary Journal, *LiNQ*; she is currently a casual Support Officer at the Cairns Institute, where she is also on the organising team for TEDxCairns. Jessica has performed spoken word poetry at numerous events including the Cairns Tropical Writers Festival and, most recently, the Cairns PechaKucha night.

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Author: Laurel McKenzie

Title: Women in Unity: Re-Imaging the Female Body in Art

Session 6B: 1:55 – 2:25 , Rm D3.063

Abstract: A significant issue for feminist artists since the 1960s has been the disruption of the binary opposition associating maleness with the mind and culture, and femaleness with the body and nature. The binary has been contested by feminists in their efforts to subvert objectifying conventions and present empowering visual imagery of women, and the results at times have been vexed. This paper will consider some of these works as well as recent theorizing about embodiment, and efforts to separate 'woman' from 'nature' (to avoid essentializing limitations). Amelia Jones' (2006) theory of 'parafeminism', which aims to extend the achievements of earlier feminist artists in ways that provide strategies for dealing with contemporary regimes of power, will be used to structure the discussion.

Bio: Laurel McKenzie is a current PhD candidate, conducting practice-led research investigating the persistence of stereotypes in the representation of women in contemporary visual art. Her practice acknowledges the role that art has played in the objectification of women and the gendered construction of identity. It employs mediated representations of women to create installations which aim to generate new, embodied meaning.

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Author: Hazel Menehira

Title: 'What Is It with Poets and Beaches?' A Personal Perspective.

Session 4C: 2:30 – 3:00, Rm D3.054

Abstract: To my amazement I discovered 649 poems about beaches on the net...on just one webpage. I began reflecting on this theme which attracts the pens of poets far and wide. In Australia, especially Far North Queensland, there are idyllic beaches inviting relaxation. In addition to all the other tourist attractions they provide an ideal setting for poets. It's easy to be blown away by the beauty of serene isolated

beaches driving from Cairns to Port Douglas. Any poet traveller would be enticed to stay awhile and find verbal images for such beach magic. But it is not always the natural beauty that evokes the lyrics. Studying beach poetry it becomes apparent that it is the release of the poet's innermost soul that is revealed through the use of the sand and ocean metaphors. Just as it is said that a photograph can capture a frozen moment in time so the beach poem crystallises an in depth insight into both the writer, factors that have brought him or her to that place in life's journey and the spontaneous outpouring that is evoked. Great classical lyricists have used the majesty of beachscape as the perfect vehicle to express their emotions and thoughts at certain times in their lives. Without beaches these in depth insights may never have been given to the world. Exploring the poems and background that brought them to life encourages writers of today to enter their own verse writing world.

Bio: Hazel Menehira FTCL (London) is an internationally recognised writer and voice teacher, as well as a retired NZSB examiner and ANZDA adjudicator. Hazel's background includes a life time in journalism and education and thirty years in professional theatre. A Cairns resident since 2003, Hazel is a mentor and tutor for writers and performers. A member of New Zealand Society of Authors, Queensland Writers Centre, Tropical Writers and Book Creators Network, she is a noted reviewer of international books for the Media/Culture webpage of the University of Queensland. She has published 15 books across a range of genres. Her memoir was launched for her 80 birthday in 2013 and this year her companion collection of poetry and short stories was published.

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Author: Angela Meyer

Title: Placemaking or Dasein?

Session 9B: 3:55 – 4:25, Rm D3.063

Abstract: This paper looks at the role of art in understanding place as a construct of the imagination, reactions to the real and lived experience. The making of a place by the activities and actions within place constitute over time notions of what things are and what they mean – meaning is constructed from symbolism, repetition and kinaesthesia.

- Placemaking establishes the meaning of a spatial context by symbolic gestures, objects and experiences;
- Dasein internalises inherent meaning from being in space that is not necessarily linked to outward contexts;
- These things together formulate the temporal frontier of culture as a transient space of activity and evolution;

- The tropics as a framework was explored in my research through artists painting the wet tropics of North Queensland.

Bio: Angela Meyer has a Bachelor of Visual Arts from the University of Sydney 1990; a Master of Creative Arts from James Cook University, 1999; and submitted her PhD at JCU in 2015. She is a Sessional Lecturer in Painting, and was a Tutor in Art History and Theory at JCU 2007-09. She is also a practising visual artist with work in public and private collections.

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Author: Peter Murphy

Title: Imagination and Creativity in the Tropics

Keynote Address: 9:30 – 10:30, Rm D3.954

Abstract: What is the difference that makes the difference? Economic development worldwide remains a mystery. Some nations climb the economic ladder, others don't. Economists point to a series of factors that account for the upward mobility of economies and societies. These include honest government, fiscal probity, intensive transport and communication networks, effective primary health and education, effective higher education, efficient government and industry, market size, technology adoption, and the ability to transition to a service economy. The tropical geographic zone historically was the world's least developed. Some of it today continues in that vein. But a number of tropic zone countries have risen to great heights including Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. Others have been steadily climbing the economic pecking order: Barbados, Brazil, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Oman, Panama, and Seychelles among them. The talk singles out a couple of the upwardly mobile countries, Panama and Costa Rica. They have the potential to enter the ranks of the most economically and socially prosperous nations. But will they? These countries can be measured against conventional economic indicators, which are important. The paper, though, goes on to look at some unconventional factors. These are of a more 'cultural' kind. However, they are also crucial to achieving peak economic success. The talk considers the role of (a) reading and religious heterodoxy, (b) beauty and abstraction, and (c) social ambidexterity. These are core constituents of the individual and collective imagination. They also arguably account for the 'creative factor' in economic behaviour. As societies climb the economic ladder, this creative factor becomes increasingly important. So when we assess the long-term prospects of countries like Panama or Costa Rica, we need to be able to measure the creative spirit as well as the efficiency and probity of their economic institutions.

Bio: Peter Murphy is Professor of Arts and Society at James Cook University, Australia. He is the author of *Universities and Innovation Economies* (2015), *The Collective Imagination* (2012) and *Civic Justice* (2001); co-author of *Dialectic of Romanticism: A Critique of Modernism* (2004), *Creativity and the Global Knowledge Economy* (2009), *Global Creation* (2010), and *Imagination* (2010); and co-editor of *Philosophical and Cultural Theories of Music* (2010) and *Aesthetic*

Capitalism (2014). He has taught at Monash University, the New School for Social Research in New York City, Baylor University Texas, Victoria University Wellington, Ateneo de Manila University, and Seoul National University. He has been a visiting academic at Ohio State University, Panteion University Athens, the University of Copenhagen and Goldsmiths College University of London.

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Author: Bobbie Ruben

Title: Reconfigured Connections: Indigenous Textiles from Remote Communities across Northern Australia

Session 8B: 3:55 – 4:25, Rm D3.059

Abstract: Over the past ten years there has been a twelve-fold increase in printed textiles from remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, along with a rise in new textile ventures in Far North Queensland remote communities. In the past two years these textiles have won awards in prestigious national art and fashion events, exhibited in art galleries, collected by national institutions, and commissioned by large corporations, and high-end design and fashion businesses. The potential for cultural affirmation, income for artists, and development of self-sustaining enterprises in remote communities, is beyond measure.

Why has this sector flourished while other parts of the Aboriginal art market have waned? Influences affecting the design and distribution of these remarkable textiles will be examined. This includes economic and market forces, and at the community level, social, economic and cultural factors. The significance of this flourishing movement and the implications for Northern Australia will be presented.

Bio: Bobbie Ruben is a practicing printmaker, lecturer and textile designer who consults, teaches and collaborates with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and students in the development of textile designs, and limited edition prints on paper. She has a strong interest in the development and success of many remote textile operations in the Northern Territory and Far North Queensland, and has worked with artists on high profile textile design commissions and textile exhibitions, which have received national and international recognition. Bobbie is currently enrolled in a PhD at James Cook University in the area of collaborative Indigenous textile work.

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Author: Pauline Sherlock

Title: The Tyrannies of Distance: From Cairns to the Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

Session 7B: 3:55 – 4:25, Rm 3.054

Abstract: Stand-up comedians need performance opportunities in order to hone their skills and develop confidence as performers. Living in Cairns, a long distance from a major comedy centre, poses problems in gaining practice and exposure as an emerging stand-up comedian. This article considers the process and outcomes of staging a stand-up comedy show in the Melbourne International Comedy Festival of 2015. The value of this experiment in providing performance opportunities which contribute to developing the skills and confidence of a stand-up comedian is explored. An auto ethnographic process has been utilised together with action based research to develop a case study. Observations are limited to the experiences of the researcher and the expressions, during interviews, of a sample of eight comedians. Staging the show in the Melbourne International Comedy Festival was challenging in many ways and expensive. The experience of being in Melbourne during the comedy festival, performing in varying situations and meeting with other comedians did provide valuable lessons, both positive and negative. This paper may serve to inform stand-up comedy performers from regional areas of the process of staging a show at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival and of the benefits and hazards of doing so.

Bio: Pauline Sherlock is a PhD student at James Cook University, in Cairns. After completing her degree with honours in performance, Pauline has been exploring the process of becoming a stand-up comedian. With a history in performance as a singer-songwriter Pauline made the switch to comedy to fulfil a long-time ambition. She has performed comedy at several events and staged a solo comedy show at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival (2015). Through the accumulation of practical experience, combined with theoretical and academic research, Pauline aims to develop a clearer understanding of stand-up comedy praxis. Living in the Tropics presents a variety of challenges, one of those being the tyranny of distance, Pauline shares some of the insights gained from attempting to overcome this distance and staging a show in one of the world's major comedy festivals.

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Author: Gavin Singleton

Title: Re-Asserting Native Title and Other Mechanisms through Economic Development Opportunities

Session 8C: 4:30 – 5:00, Rm D3.059

Abstract: The presentation will centre around the Sea Country Plan (and TUMRA), but will also include our ranger program, crocodile management tender and Indigenous Fashion Show.

Bio: Gavin Singleton was born in Kuranda and now lives in Cairns, recently completing a Bachelor of Applied Science with Curtin University. A Yirrganydji Traditional Owner, Gavin was part of the group that developed the first Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement between the Australian and Queensland Government and north Queensland's Yirrganydji people. Gavin is also Project Officer at Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation. The name Dawul Wuru ("Three Rivers") was given in the traditional aboriginal language of the Cairns to Port Douglas Region and signifies three significant river systems in the wider Cairns Region, North Queensland. One Direction represents 'partnerships' and working together to achieve collective goals for the future of the people of the region.

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Author: Chrystopher Spicer

Title: "Big wind, he waiting there." Vance Palmer's Cyclones of Apocalypse and Their Power of Revelation.

Session 4B: 1:55 – 2:25, Rm D3.054

Abstract: Prior to writing his 1947 novel, *Cyclone*, Queensland author Vance Palmer drafted out many of his ideas for the story in three earlier short stories: 'Cyclone' (1932), and 'Big Wind' and 'Tempest,' both published in 1936. In these stories and the later novel, Palmer develops the cyclone as trope of apocalypse, of an unveiling and realization of the new inherent within the destruction of the old. As a result of experiencing both the terror and the mystery of the apocalyptic cyclonic event, Palmer's characters realise they have transcended fears and inadequacies within themselves, enabling them to re-create new lives and new worlds.

Bio: The author of a number of books on Australian history and film history, including *Duchess: The Story of the Windsor Hotel*, *Great Australian World Firsts*, and *Clark Gable: Biography*, and a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, Chrystopher Spicer currently lectures and tutors creative and academic writing at James Cook University.

In the course of his PhD research, he is investigating cyclones as a trope in Queensland literature. In a physical landscape impacted by some 207 tropical cyclones since 1858, Queensland writers have attempted to incorporate both the terror and the sublime of the cyclone into their sense of place. As they have attempted to find context for the unpredictable, chaotic and destructive tropical cyclone, the cyclone has become a defining symbol of both the physical and literary Queensland. Some Queensland writers have perceived within cyclones the Burkean sublime or personal revelation, while others have seen it as motivation for community strength, co-operation and compassion. For some, the cyclone is divine retribution but to others, such as writer and critic Vance Palmer, it's an apocalyptic event revealing a rare second chance for revelation and renewal.

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Author: Janet Liu Terry

Title: Hiraeth of the Third Culture Adult: Displacement and Identity

Session 2C: 12:00 – 12:30 , Rm D3.059

Abstract: Hiraeth is a Welsh word that has no direct English translation. The University of Wales, Lampeter attempts to define it as homesickness tinged with grief or sadness over the lost or departed. It is a mix of longing, yearning, nostalgia, wistfulness, or an earnest desire for the Wales of the past. Oxford and Merriam Webster define Hiraeth as: "a homesickness for a home you cannot return to, or that never was".

Who is a third culture person? What are her characteristics? What are the most common traits. The writer also explores her right to ownership of her name, what it is to navigate narrow, winding roads of daily social interaction in a place called "home", the politics of the pavement, to avoid tripping on the cobblestones of majority mores, the queue, the ear in profile, managing expectations of the 'host people' caused by cognitive dissonance involving the history of race in Australia.

She ends her paper with self-definition and finding her "country".

Bio: Janet Liu Terry was born in China, lived in India, East Pakistan, Hong Kong, Britain, Jamaica. She migrated to Cairns in 1992 where she has lived since. She has an abiding claim on Chinese history and now reads with interest history of Chinese in Australia. In her professional life, she has been in academic editing and publishing at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. She was script writer and producer (with Sandy Whitaker) of the short film "Chinaman Creek" (2012). She also presented the paper, 'Finding Chinaman Creek' at the first Tropics of the Imagination conference, JCU Cairns, 2013. In July 2015, she presented a paper entitled 'Through the Brick Wall & Into a Garden of Infinite Delight: Australian History in China', at the 4th Australasian conference overseas Chinese history and heritage, Cairns, 2015.

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Author: Jocene Vallack

Title: Doing Theatre as Research: A Mysterious Mix

Session 3C: 12:00 – 12:30, Rm D3.063

Abstract: The Australian Curriculum mandates that Arts will be taught as part of the Foundation to Year 10 program. My background as a Theatre-in-Education performer and as a Drama teacher has informed an approach to doing research with children, which involves making up plays about local stories. Firstly, local folk are interviewed and their anecdotes are recorded as data. The children then analyse and interpret the data, as a group, with the help of their teacher. It is then synthesised into a written play script. I have found this Theatre as Research approach to be a wonderful tool for integrating the teaching of local history with the Arts. It also has

potential to strengthen community bonds and enhance inter-generational communication. Once the play has been created, the storytellers are invited as audience members to see their lives played out on stage.

The paper will relate examples of how I have performed ethnographic Drama with various secondary and tertiary students to facilitate and present research. It will then offer a step by step approach for doing Theatre as Education.

Bio: Formerly an actor, writer, director and Drama teacher, I worked mostly in TV Education (Channel 7, Melbourne) and then for four years in theatre-in-education with Polyglot Puppet Theatre and No Strings Puppet Theatre, touring throughout Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. As a Drama teacher I held many positions of responsibility in Victorian Secondary Schools and later in London, before completing a PhD in Education and taking work in Higher Education. I have held memberships with Australian and British Actors' Equity Alliances, Association for Qualitative Research and the committee of the European Conference for Research Methodologies. Currently I work as a Lecturer in Arts Education at James Cook University, in Townsville, Australia. I have developed an original approach to research called Alchemy Methodology, which is theoretically informed by pure phenomenology, and uses arts-based methods. I have lectured in Research Methodology at Monash and LaTrobe Universities, and also as a volunteer in Tanzania. I have also worked as a Research Fellow at CQUniversity on the PLEs@CQU project, 2008-10. More recently, my work and research is focussed on Theatre as a means to Research and Pedagogy.

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Author: Chris Wighton

Title: Legless and all at sea on the Great Barrier Reef

Session 7C: 4:30 – 5:00, Rm 3.054

Abstract: This session will feature a video of a talk given at a local TEDx event, produced independently of the TED Conferences. Chris Wighton became a T12 paraplegic following a mountain bike accident. During his talk Chris tells his powerful and personal story of reconnecting with the things and environment he loves and concludes with a performance of one of his beautiful original songs. Chris will then comment on his TEDx talk and answer questions.

Bio: I am a paraplegic, Youth worker and musician 59 years of age and a resident in Cairns since 1986. My other pursuits include swimming, writing and reading. I've completed many long distance ocean kayak adventures all along the far north coast from Rockhampton to Lockhart River.

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