Digital Approaches in the Study of Early-Modern Visual Culture

2-4 November 2015

Convenors
Robert Wellington, The School of Art Centre for Art History and Art Theory, ANU
Stephen Whiteman, The Power Institute at the University of Sydney

With the generous support of
The ANU Research School of Humanities and Arts Visiting Scholars Fund
The Power Institute at the University of Sydney
## Monday 2 November

**Venue:** Theatrette (2.02) Sir Roland Wilson Building (SRWB)

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<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td>Welcome from the Dean and opening comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30-10:30</td>
<td>Caroline Bruzelius (Duke University): <em>The Kingdom of Sicily Image Database: Creating a Scholarly Resource</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30-10:45</td>
<td>Morning tea – level 2 foyer SRWB</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45-11:45</td>
<td>Niall Atkinson (University of Chicago), <em>Mapping Florentine Soundscapes: Seeing Sound and Space</em></td>
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<td>11:45-12:45</td>
<td>Lisa Beaven (The University of Melbourne), <em>Digitalising the Roman Campagna</em></td>
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<td>12:45-13:45</td>
<td>Lunch – level 3 foyer SRWB</td>
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<td>13:45-14:45</td>
<td>Hussein Keshani (University of British Columbia), <em>Painted Space: 3D modelling Early Modern paintings from Awadh, India</em></td>
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<td>14:45-15:45</td>
<td>Stephen Whiteman (The University of Sydney), <em>Mapping Spatial Narratives at the Mountain Estate to Escape the Summer Heat</em></td>
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<td>15:45-16:00</td>
<td>Afternoon tea – level 2 foyer SRWB</td>
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<td>16:00-17:00</td>
<td>Erin Helyard, Glenn Roe, and Robert Wellington (ANU), <em>Performing Transdisciplinarity: Image, Music, and Text in Eighteenth-Century Print Culture</em></td>
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<td>17:00-17:30</td>
<td>Closing discussion chaired by Mark Ledbury (The University of Sydney)</td>
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<td>19:00</td>
<td>Dinner – Taze, 21 Genge Street, Canberra.</td>
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## Tuesday 3 November

**Venue:** National Library of Australia; National Gallery of Australia; Sir Roland Wilson Building, ANU

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-11:00</td>
<td>A presentation on the National Library of Australia’s digital programs hosted by Tim Sherratt (NLA and University of Canberra)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30-13:00</td>
<td>A demonstration of 5 innovative and experimental interfaces, developed for the National Gallery of Australia’s Australian Prints + Printmaking website hosted by Mitchell Whitelaw and Ben Ennis-Butler (University of Canberra)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:00-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch – NGA members café</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:00-17:00</td>
<td>Postgraduate Workshop on the use of digital technology for research on art history and visual culture.</td>
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## Wednesday 4 November

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:30-11:00</td>
<td>Guided tour of the ‘Canberra Plan’ from Mount Ainsley, presented by Anne Brennan (ANU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00-11:50</td>
<td>Transit to Canberra train station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50-16:00</td>
<td>Train from Canberra to Sydney</td>
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Niall Atkinson (University of Chicago), Mapping Florentine Soundscapes: Seeing Sound and Space

In Canto VIII of the Purgatorio, Dante describes a moment in which all Christians of his age were united by a sound that mourned the passing of another day. But this ring from afar, this “squilla da lontano” could also pierce the heart of travelers with love, uniting them in a common bond with the inhabitants of a far off city. What Dante heard was the evening bell, part of a complex system of acoustic exchanges produced by bells and towers that demarcated both the temporal and the spatial jurisdictions of the pre-modern European city.

It is the claim of this paper that psycho-spatial territories came into being through the complex ways in which buildings and bodies communicated with each other across the cityscape of Renaissance Florence. With the examples of both ritual processions and political transgressions, I argue that the overlaid topographies of the city came into being in a meaningful way only through the interaction of an acoustic dialogue that set time and space in motion. As a result, this paper also explores ways of rendering such acoustic relationships visible in order to see how we can understand territorial maps in more complex sensorial way.

Lisa Beaven (The University of Melbourne), Digitalising the Roman Campagna

This paper discusses the project, Digitalising the Roman Campagna, developed in conjunction with the British School at Rome library and Valerie Scott, which is still in its initial stages. The aim ultimately is to create a digital map of the Roman Campagna that could function as a database and repository of information about both the classical and early modern Campagna. The two maps digitalised so far are Giacomo Filippo Ameti’s Il Lazio con le sue conspicue Strade Antiche e Moderne (1693), and Giovani Battista Cingolani della Pergola’s Topografia Geometrica dell’Agro Romano, of 1704 (second edition).

The two maps provide a wealth of interdisciplinary data about the nature of the Campagna in the early modern period. In particular they show the extent of the swamps and areas of stagnant water in the Campagna caused by climate change, which were responsible for a deteriorating rural environment that led to malaria being endemic in the region in the seventeenth century. They also reveal the extent of deforestation during the period. This environmental information is extremely patchy in archival and other written sources but plainly visible on the maps. Finally the Ameti map provides detailed records of the ownership of individual tenute, as well as glimpses of the seasonal populations that moved across its plains: the shepherds who inhabited it in winter, and the summer seasonal workers who worked the fields in the summer. The latter died of malaria in large numbers and their bodies were not only collected by the Archconfraternity of S. Maria dell’Orazione e Morte, but also listed in their Elenco dei Morti, along with their find spots. One of the goals of the project is visualise this data on the maps.
Caroline Bruzelius (Duke University), *The Kingdom of Sicily Image Database: Creating a Scholarly Resource*

The Kingdom of Sicily Database collects and describes images of the monuments erected by the Norman, German and French rulers of South Italy, structures that were built not only as administrative centers but also as affirmations of state identity. Under its European rulers, the Kingdom of Sicily became a central conduit for the transmission of architectural concepts (the rib, the pointed arch) from Islam and Byzantium to northern cultures. This artistic patrimony, however, has fallen prey to natural and man-made calamities: it was bombed by the Allies in the Second World War (Messina, Palermo, Naples), devastated by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions (Catania and Naples), and often heavily restored in the immediate post-war period. The exponential growth of cities has transformed the ways in which we perceive sites in their natural and urban environments: church towers that once loomed over cities and harbors are now immersed in constellations of skyscrapers, and the pleasure gardens of palaces buried under apartment complexes. The drawings and plans made by Grand Tour travelers, artists and architects that are now dispersed throughout museums, archives and libraries therefore have special importance for reconstructing the original appearance of these historic monuments. But how can any one scholar track down all the images of a certain site? This database is a geo-referenced archive of images intended for study purposes, and in the coming year we hope to develop a mapping component that will enable scholars to follow the itineraries of artists and travelers as well as the diffusion of certain stylistic concepts.

Hussein Keshani, *Painted Space: 3D modelling Early Modern paintings from Awadh, India*

Suppose you decided to build a detailed 3D model of an 18th century miniature painting from Awadh, India. The painting is of an elaborate and architecturally complex garden-palace with bejewelled women enjoying music and drugs. Space is represented with a distinctive Early Modern Indian hybrid of perspective and orthographic techniques, an entanglement of Anglo-European and late-Mughal spatial representation conventions. How does one go about converting the space represented into space a 3D modelling program can live with? What new kinds of questions or insights does making the model generate about the painting, the portrayal of space, and the gazes within, if any? Finally, what do you do with the model? How do you present and explicate what the model offers and what practical value and possibilities exist beyond the realm of scholarship?

This paper chronicles the research process of the MODEL IMAGES project and examines the scholarly and practical values of making digital objects as a form of scholarship about transcultural visual cultures of Early Modern India. It proposes that the 3D modelling of paintings makes a worthwhile addition to the range of visually/spatially based methods of interpreting visual culture. The implication being that visual cultural analysis need not be a mostly textual affair, but one that necessarily entails the production of the visual.

Erin Helyard, Glenn Roe, and Robert Wellington (ANU), *Performing Transdisciplinarity: Image, Music, and Text in Eighteenth-Century Print Culture*

This transdisciplinary study of Jean-Benjamin de Laborde’s ambitious eighteenth-century songbook, *Choix de Chansons* (1773), aims to provide new methodologies for inquiry into
eighteenth-century culture by ‘unbinding’ discipline specialization through the interface of transdisciplinary collaboration, deep historical contextualization, and new media dissemination. This project brings together research by specialists in eighteenth-century image, music and text under the aegis of a digital interface that will act as a transdisciplinary framework for sharing and linking deep disciplinary knowledge, while at the same time providing a platform for an innovative recreation of the sounds, sensibilities and social mores of late-eighteenth-century France.

**Stephen Whiteman, Mapping Spatial Narratives at the Mountain Estate to Escape the Summer Heat**

This project explores a number of different approaches to reconstructing aspects of early modern gardens in China using GIS and other tools for geospatial visualization. The primary focus of my current research is the Mountain Estate to Escape the Summer Heat (Bishu shanzhuang), a 1400-acre park-palace in Inner Mongolia developed by two different Qing emperors over the course of the 18th century. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the parks earliest forms have been obscured by three centuries of use, decay, and reconstruction, and with them, so too have the modes of rulership that motivated the garden’s original design and construction. With few archival documents and no architectural drawings or models surviving from its earliest years, GIS offers interesting possibilities not only for reconstructing the earliest architectural strata at the site, but also for visualizing alternative landscapes, including the literary, the philosophical, the sensory, and the experiential. These “imperial imaginaries” represent important alternatives to contemporary architectural history methodologies for accessing understandings of the relationship between early modern emperorship and the landscape.

**BIOGRAPHIES**

**Niall Atkinson** is the Neubauer Family Assistant professor of Art History and the College. His research has focused on the urban experience of the Renaissance city and he has just completed a book manuscript on the soundscapes of Renaissance Florence and continues to explore ways of visualizing the socio-spatial dimensions of the urban soundscape. His current research is exploring the more immersive sensorial perception of the urban environment, which has led him into a study of travel writing and personal descriptions of foreign territories, cities, and monuments by travellers in the pre-modern Mediterranean world.

**Lisa Beaven** is a post-doctoral research fellow in the Australian Research Council’s Centre for Excellence in the History of Emotions at Melbourne University. Her research focus is on art patronage and collecting in seventeenth century Rome, with a particular interest in landscape painting and the Roman Campagna. She has published several articles and book chapters on Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin and (with Professor Angela Ndalianis) holds an ARC Discovery Grant *Spatial Encounters: The Baroque, the Neo-Baroque and the Senses*. Her most recent book, *An Ardent Patron: Cardinal Camillo Massimo and his artistic and antiquarian circle*, was published in 2010. Her current research project examines sensory and emotional responses to art and sculpture in seventeenth century Rome.

From 1994 to 1998 Bruzelius was Director of the American Academy in Rome. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Association, the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, the National Humanities Center, and the Fulbright Foundation. She has also received the Duke University Alumni Teaching Award.

**Ben Ennis-Butler** is a doctoral candidate and associate lecturer within the Center for Creative Cultural Research in the Faculty of Arts and Design at the University of Canberra. His practice-led research is investigating how new visual information seeking techniques can encourage exploration and discovery within digital cultural heritage collections.

**Erin Helyard** graduated in harpsichord performance from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with first-class honours and the University Medal. He completed his Masters in fortepiano performance and a PhD in musicology with Tom Beghin at the Schulich School of Music, McGill University, Montreal. He was named the Westfield Concert Scholar on fortepiano for 2009-2010, an initiative of the John Ernest Foundation. Erin was lecturer in Historical Performance at the New Zealand School of Music and is currently Lecturer in Music at the Australian National University. Erin is highly active in reviving eighteenth-century operas in performance and score.

**Hussein Keshani**’s research interests include the visual cultures of 18th and 19th C Awadh India, particularly with regards to the role of gender and sexuality and digital methods of inquiry. Currently, he is an Associate Professor with the Art History & Visual Culture program in the Department of Critical Studies at The University of British Columbia’s Okanagan campus in Kelowna, Canada, as well as acting Director of the Centre for Culture and Technology.

**Glenn Roe** is a Lecturer in Digital Humanities at the ANU Centre for Digital Humanities Research. After receiving his PhD in French Literature from the University of Chicago in 2010, he held a Mellon Fellowship in Digital Humanities at the University of Oxford before coming to the ANU. He has published on a variety of scholarly subjects, from French literary and intellectual history, to the design and use of new digital methodologies for humanities research. His first book, *The Passion of Charles Péguy: Literature, Modernity, and the Crisis of Historicism*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2014.

**Tim Sherratt** is a historian and hacker who researches the possibilities and politics of digital cultural collections. He’s been creating online resources relating to archives, museums and
history since 1993. Tim has worked across the cultural sector and is currently the Assistant
Director of Trove at the National Library of Australia, and Associate Professor of Digital
Heritage at the University of Canberra.

Robert Wellington is a Lecturer at the Centre for Art History and Art Theory at the
Australian National University. His research focusses on the material culture of the ancien-
règime court, with a particular interest in print culture and commemorative medals. His
book, Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV: Artifacts for a Future Past, was
published by Ashgate in September 2015.

Mitchell Whitelaw is an academic, writer and practitioner with interests in new media art
and culture, especially generative systems, data-aesthetics, and digital cultural collections.
His work has appeared in journals including Digital Humanities Quarterly, Leonardo, Digital
Creativity, Fibreculture, and Senses and Society. His current work spans materiality, data
and culture, with a practical focus on creating “generous interfaces” for digital heritage. He
has worked with institutions including the State Library of NSW, the National Archives, and
the National Gallery of Australia, developing innovative interfaces to their digital collections.
Mitchell is currently an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Design
<http://www.canberra.edu.au/faculties/arts-design/> at the University of Canberra
<http://www.canberra.edu.au/>, where he leads the Digital Treasures program in the

Stephen Whiteman is Lecturer in Asian Art at the University of Sydney and a historian of art
and architecture in early modern China. His research focuses on gardens and pictorial
landscapes of the Qing dynasty. Current projects include a collaborative exploration of
imperial landscapes across early modern Eurasia; a co-authored study of imperial poetry
and image making in the early Qing court, Thirty-Six Views: The Kangxi Emperor’s Mountain
Estate in Poetry and Print (Harvard, forthcoming); and Ambitious Alignments: New Histories
of Southeast Asian Art, an international research collaborative supported by the Getty
Foundation and the Power Institute Foundation.