

ADRIAAN GERBRANDS LECTURE BY TONY BENNETT**RE-COLLECTING OURSELVES: INDIGENOUS TIME, CULTURE AND MUSEUMS****Programme****30 November 2017 – 4:30pm – 7:30pm**

16:30 **Welcome & Announcement of the RCMC-FEL Junior Scholars and Fellows** by Wayne Modest (Head, Research Center for Material Culture)

16:45 **Welcome & Introduction** by Peter Pels (Professor in the Anthropology and Sociology of Africa, Leiden University)

17:00 **Adriaan Gerbrands Lecture: Professor Tony Bennett** (Research Professor in Social and Cultural Theory at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University)

18:30 **Reception**

19:30 **End**

Re-collecting Ourselves: Indigenous Time, Culture and Museums

I use the phrase 'Re-collecting ourselves' to refer to a range of critical interfaces that have been produced between Indigenous Australians and museums through which the former have reasserted varying degrees of symbolic and material control over collections that were earlier ceded to museums in varying relations of unequal exchange. I shall argue, however, that the 'selves' that are thus re-collected are not—and cannot be—exclusively or essentially Indigenous but are rather caught up in ongoing processes of negotiation between Indigenous and Western knowledges to yield a range of new hybridised identities, cultures and pasts. I probe these issues by looking first at the *Encounters – Revealing Stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Objects from the British Museum* exhibition that was held, across 2015 to 2016, at the National Museum of Australia. I consider this in the light of the longer history through which the culture concept initially developed in American anthropology, and the associated concept of culture areas, has contributed to a reconfiguration of the relations between Australian museums and their Indigenous 'source communities' in ways that have made the latter, so to speak, 'anthropologists of themselves.' I also engage with National Museum of Australia's parallel exhibition—*Unsettled*—which exemplifies a range of curatorial and art projects through which Indigenous Australian have critiqued the role that museums have played in collecting, and re-collecting, Indigenous cultures.

Tony Bennett is a Research Professor in Social and Cultural Theory at the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. He is a member of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

Professor Bennett's interests span a number of areas across the social sciences and humanities, with significant contributions to the fields of literary theory, cultural studies, cultural sociology, and museum studies. His work in literary studies includes influential assessments of the relations between formalist and Marxist criticism, and critical appraisals of Marxist aesthetic theory. In cultural studies his work has had a formative influence on the study of popular culture and he has played a leading role in the development of cultural policy studies. His work in cultural sociology includes major surveys of the social patterns of cultural practice and consumption in both Australia and Britain, and critical engagements with the sociology of literature and audience and reception theory. His work in museum studies has contributed to the development of the 'new museology' particularly in the light it has thrown on the role of museums as instruments of social governance.

His most recent books include *Culture, Class, Distinction* (2009, co-author), *Material Powers* (2010, co-editor), *Assembling Culture* (2011, co-editor), *Making Culture, Changing Society* (2013), and *Challenging (the) Humanities* (editor, 2013). His work has been translated into French, Swedish, German, Italian, Spanish, Greek, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, and he has lectured at universities, art galleries and museums in Europe, Asia, Africa, Asia and North America. He has worked in a consulting or advisory capacity for a range of governmental organisations, including UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and has conducted research collaborations with a wide range of cultural sector and government organisations in Australia and Britain. He is currently co-editor of the *Journal of Cultural Economy* and of the *Culture, Economy and the Social* book series published by Routledge, and is currently working on the Australian Research Council Discovery Project [Museum, Field, Metropolis, Colony: Practices of Social Governance](#).



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