

J.M. Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice presents

Water Thinking: Caring for Oceans and Sharing Connections in a Time of Climate Crisis



Dr Jenny Newell is currently Acting Director, Programs, Exhibitions and Cultural Collections at the Australian Museum, Sydney, where she has also worked as Manager of the East Pacific Collections. She has previously worked as a curator of Pacific Ethnography at the American Museum of Natural History, a research fellow at the National Museum of Australia, Canberra and a curator at the British Museum. Her particular interests are on material culture and the relationships between Pacific Islanders and their environments. Her major research projects explore the cultural impacts of climate change in the Pacific. Jenny has a PhD in Pacific History from ANU and has published on Tahitian environmental history and Pacific material culture.



While we are all intimately immersed on the cellular level, rely on water for sustenance, and often think with fluid metaphors, people in the world's watery regions, such as the Pacific, live and think yet more intimately with water. With islands created and connected by the ocean, ongoing flows of navigated histories and ancestral power, water in the Pacific is a unifying medium, interconnecting living, non-living, and intangible things, providing undercurrents of personal and community identity, and the stage for surges of political action.

Focusing on voices from the Marshall Islands, Samoa and Tahiti, I will explore how people in the

region think about and living with their climate-changing bodies of water. Water is encroaching, disappearing or altering its nature, in lagoons, on ocean shores, streambeds, water lenses and wells. Pacific Islanders are increasingly communicating their understandings of people and water and their practices of care – locally and globally, through face-to-face and digital conversation, performance, image and writing.

It is clear that, as the West's compartmentalized, exploitative paradigms continue to enable the mounting disasters of the Anthropocene, more water thinking is urgently needed.

This FREE public lecture has been organised as part of the H2O: Life & Death conference, hosted by the J.M. Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice and supported by the EU Centre for Global Affairs. For more information, visit our website: <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/jmcoetzeecentre/calendar2017/h2oconference/>



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& ideas come together*