

**ANU SCHOOL OF ART
Art Theory Workshop**

**ANNUAL LECTURE
Thursday 25 October 6pm
School of Art Lecture Theatre**

First floor, above the main entrance to the School of Art on Childers Street.

Dr Chris McAuliffe

Back formation and rediscovery: reflections on radical revisionism

In *Radical revisionism* (2005) art historian Rex Butler defined revisionism as 'a history that is interested in the art of the past only insofar as it is rewritten from the perspective of the present'. Is art history really a type of 'back formation'; a retrospective construction of a false antecedent for the present?

This lecture addresses that question in a series of reflections on Australian art of the last hundred years. Focusing on the act of looking and on the questions provoked by works of art, McAuliffe will explore art history as a process of holding art in the past, rather than reforming it for the present. The discovery of overlooked corners and forgotten context is a reminder of moments at which the art of the past constructed itself for its own present, not ours. There is a different kind of revisionism here, one driven by rediscovery not appropriation. Exploring the work of household names (Albert Tucker, John Brack), forgotten artists (Clewin Harcourt, Tommaso Sani) and contemporary practitioners (Linda Marrinon, Jon Cattapan), McAuliffe will argue for the pleasures and challenges of the past, and suggest paths still untravelled in Australian art history.

Dr Chris McAuliffe is Director of the Ian Potter Museum of Art at The University of Melbourne. Prior to that he was for ten years a lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Melbourne. Dr McAuliffe has researched and written extensively in the area of contemporary art and is the author of *Art and Suburbia*, 1996, and *Linda Marrinon: Let her try*, 2007. He is a regular media commentator on the arts and currently appears in ABC TV's 'Sunday Arts'. A graduate of the University of Melbourne and Harvard University, Dr McAuliffe is currently completing a book on Jon Cattapan while developing exhibition projects on Giorgio Morandi, Neil Diamond and Jackson Pollock.

For information contact Dr Christopher Chapman, Lecturer, Art Theory Workshop, ANU School of Art. Christopher.chapman@anu.edu.au or 0403 807 805.