

From the Chair:



Dear fellow Members and Supporters of ArtsNational Molonglo Plains,

Welcome back to another year of stimulating lectures with a group of like-minded members! This year's program promises to be a stunner, with ten lectures and two Special Interest Mornings introducing a wide range of topics from our visiting UK lecturers, and return visits from some of our most popular Australian lecturers: historian Sam Bowker, cinematographer/travel guide Piet de Vries and glamour girl Claudia Chan Shaw.

Our first lecture in February will introduce us to a new Australian lecturer – Nick Eckstein, who will transport us back to Renaissance Florence in the time of the Plague.

Our first Special Interest Morning in April will again showcase the cinematic talents of Piet de Vries as we take a musical journey through springtime in Tokyo, and something totally different with a trip into space with the Endeavour Space Shuttle!

Our theatre parties to the Q Theatre have proved to be a big hit, so we will start taking expressions of interest for the next big performance there – Les Misérables, in May.

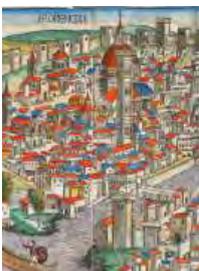
I would like to welcome Roz Townsend as a new member of our Committee. Roz has a great podcast, which will include some fascinating background interviews with some of our visiting lecturers – see details in this newsletter.

I look forward to catching up with you all on February 19.

Lindy Ross, Chair.

PS. Don't forget all details of lectures and events are available on our website <https://www.artsnational.au/societies/molonglo-plains/>

Next lecture:
Renaissance
Florence p.2



**March and April
Lecture previews**
p. 3,4

**Igniting the
Rainbow**

**On Tour with
the Queen**

Theatre Party
May:
Les Misérables
p.6



**Special Interest
Morning**
p.5



2.

Our first lecture for the New Year – back in time to Renaissance Florence

Thursday 19 February 2pm

NICK ECKSTEIN: Florence on Foot: Walking the Renaissance City in Time of Plague

Nick Eckstein is a historian with an international reputation for his innovative research into the society and culture of Renaissance Florence.

As Cassamarca Associate Professor of Italian Renaissance History, Nick taught and researched in the History Department at the University of Sydney for 22 years. Nick is also a former Deborah Loeb Brice fellow (1999-2000) and Visiting Professor (2003, 2006) at the prestigious Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, 'Villa I Tatti', in Florence. His many publications include *Painted*

Glories: The Brancacci Chapel in Renaissance Florence (Yale University Press, 2014), a lively exploration of how contemporary audiences viewed and engaged with one of the greatest artistic commissions of the early Renaissance. Nick has long been recognised as an inspiring teacher, and for his ability to bring the world of the Italian Renaissance to life in the minds of his students, and he has received several University awards for his teaching.



With pestilence approaching in August 1630, Florence's health officials commissioned a society of aristocratic lay brothers to search the city's streets and alleys for signs of disease.

In making their so-called 'Visitation', the Fratelli of the Archangel Michael compiled an extraordinary handwritten record of every household they visited, which survives today in the Florentine State Archives. The fratelli's notes are indeed a map, but not like conventional maps we know. Rather than show the city all at once from above, the brothers' map Florence on the ground, one household at a time. In each dwelling, the brothers describe what they find, even reproducing words spoken to them by the poorest of the city's poor folk.

This lecture is a journey like no other. We will walk alongside the patrolling pairs of plague-braving aristocrats; we will join in their intimate, eye-level mapping that invert the patriotic visions we popularly associate with the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance. Confronting a city in crisis, we will also encounter a moving enactment of Christian charity and courage.



... and our March lecture:

Thursday 12 March 2pm

SUSAN KAY-WILLIAMS:

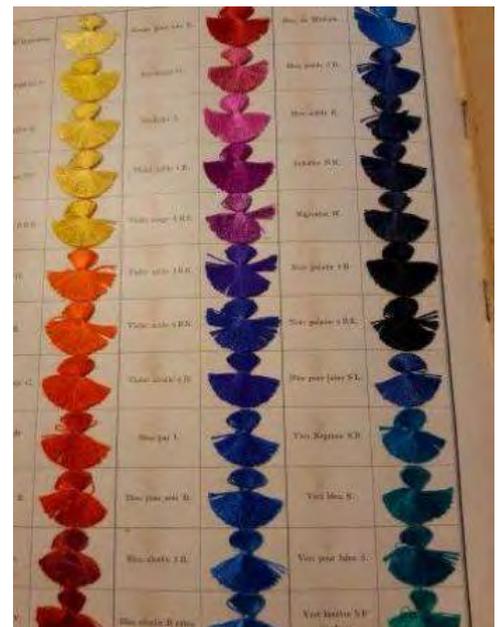
Igniting the Rainbow: Dramatic developments in colour in textiles in the 19th century.

(Also known as Poison, Poo, and Mad Scientists)!

Susan was the Chief Executive of the Royal School of Needlework, based at Hampton Court Palace for 17 years. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and the Chartered Institute of Marketing and in 2015 was made a Fellow of the Society of Dyers and Colourists in recognition of her work on the history of dyes. Susan has a longstanding interest in textiles, especially colour, and published her first book, *The Story of Colour in Textiles* (Bloomsbury) in 2013. She has extensive lecturing experience and has been invited to lecture in the USA, Canada, China, Japan and Taiwan as well as for the V&A and across the UK. In 2022 she published *An Unbroken Thread: the 150-year history of the Royal School of Needlework*. She is currently the President elect of the Society of Dyers and Colourists.



My current research is on the 19th century developments in dyeing and social history. This lecture begins with the last great developments in natural colours at the end of the 18th century and then looks at the impact of Scheele's green. We visit the chief dye scientist of the Gobelins factory in Paris, Michel Chevreul, and explore the impact of the great international exhibitions where new developments were proudly displayed. Then we reach the serendipitous discovery of coal tar colours by the 18-year-old William Perkin and all that unleashed, resulting in hundreds of new colours and shades by the end of the 19th century used in everything from fashion to painting and household items. This is a vibrant lecture that reveals the pace of change.



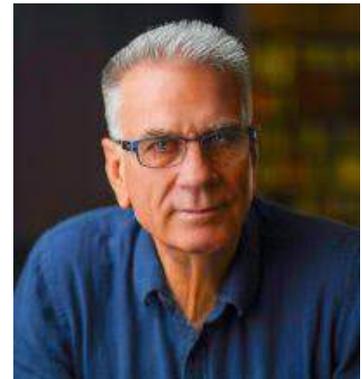
... and our April double header – lecture plus Special Interest Morning:

Thursday 16 April 2pm

PIET DE VRIES (back by popular demand): On Tour With The Queen: Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand.

Sydney filmmaker Pieter de Vries is one of the leading documentary cinematographers in the world, travelling six months of the year to every imaginable location.

His career has seen him filming the Red Army in China, rats in the sewers of New York and the wreck of the 'Titanic' with director James Cameron. Pieter has contributed to programs hosted by Sir David Attenborough and was director of photography for 'Darwin's Lost Paradise'. His numerous awards have included Cinematographer of the Year, and an Emmy nomination. His work has featured on NBC, BBC, History, Discover and National Geographic channels as well as on ABC television.



Piet was the cinematographer for this delightful BBC series, and in this presentation, he'll be screening and discussing various segments.

The documentary aimed to emulate Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip's extensive 1953/54 Coronation Tour of the Commonwealth. It blended gorgeous archival films with contemporary footage to create a nostalgic time capsule of that tour.



Google **ABC Conversations Pieter de Vries** to find the recording of Piet's 'Conversation' with Sarah Kanowski on ABC Radio.

... and then, on the following day, more of Piet's cinematic magic and fascinating traveller's tales!

SPECIAL INTEREST MORNING: These two one-hour lectures with a delicious morning tea, 10am – 12.30pm Friday 17 April.

Lecture 1: SPRINGTIME IN TOKYO:

In this musical journey into Antonio Vivaldi's The Four Seasons, Pieter will present select segments from his documentary "4", a big hit at a Sydney Film Festival. This talk features an exquisite performance of "Spring" from Vivaldi's The Four Seasons by renowned Japanese violinist Sayaka Shoji. She's taking a class of prodigiously talented youngsters through the music and, as she asks them for their thoughts on each passage, Pieter - an artist in the use of the high-definition digital camera - intercuts scenes of Tokyo's streets and parks. People are preparing for the cherry blossom festival and by the time Shoji gets round to performing the concerto, we will have seen the city's green corners in all moods and at all hours. There's a ravishing glimpse of the blossoms in lantern light and the sounds of birdsong, thunder and falling rain. And after the rain falls, so do the blossoms as Shoji talks about the way the Japanese believe that beauty resides only in things that do not last. Through his cinematography, Pieter captures the essence of Japan's Cherry Blossom love story, offering an immersive and visually stunning visual and musical experience.



Lecture 2: THE SPACE SHUTTLE: a butterfly on a rocket

This presentation is a cinematic journey in NASA's Space Shuttle program from its ambitious start to its final missions. Through his 12-week film shoot at Cape Canaveral and Mission Control in Houston, Piet's Emmy Award winning documentary offers extraordinary footage from unprecedented access to the Space Shuttle, Endeavour, a privilege never before granted. He will share behind-the-scenes stories and delve into the missions and the individuals who made the Space Shuttle program a defining chapter in space exploration.

\$50 for members/ \$55 for non-members

Booking link <https://www.trybooking.com/DHEYK>



Our next ArtsNational Molonglo Plains social event- a theatre party to see 'Les Misérables' at the Q Theatre, Queanbeyan.

As a group of ArtsN MP members and friends we've seen 'Oklahoma', 'Sweet Charity' and 'The Pirates of Penzance' in the last couple of years. All have agreed they've been very enjoyable experiences – the Q Theatre has great seating and parking, and we like to support the local theatrical community.

So this year we have . . .



Tickets have not yet gone on sale but this is sure to be a very popular show! However, we know the dates and can predict that there will probably be a Saturday matinee performance on **Saturday May 30.**

As soon as tickets go on sale we will reserve a block of seats for our merry bunch of theatre-goers from Molonglo Plains. So if you are interested in attending, you can send an expression of interest, **now**, to Chair Lindy Ross (personal email lindy.ross32@gmail.com) and there will also be sign-on lists at the February and March lectures

From the Membership Secretary:

Your 2026 Molonglo Plains Committee:

We have a great team of people on our committee, headed up by **Lindy Ross** at the helm as Chair.

Vice Chair is **Jan Whyte**, who also organises the Raffles and Lighting!

Susie Ryrrie is Secretary and takes note of proceedings at our committee meetings.

Lydia Melnikoff is our Treasurer and is very diligent in organising our funds so that we make the most of the monies at our disposal!

Jess Cameron is Membership Secretary, assisted by **Chris Costas** as Co-Membership Secretary and Technical, Computer and Stage Management wrangler.

Lucy Costas is Lecturer Liaison Officer, responsible for welcoming the visiting lecturers and making sure they are comfortable. She is also on the National Committee as *ArtsNational in the Community Coordinator*.

Margot Sawyer is responsible for ordering the food for afternoon tea and making sure the kitchen runs smoothly.

Liz Grant, Sophia Notaras, Anna Prosser, Meralyn Bubear and **Bev Webb** are stalwarts of the Committee who step in and help out wherever they are needed.

And please welcome **Roz Townsend** (see below) who has now joined the committee.

Barry Cranston heads up our '**Friends of the Committee**' group of willing 'as needed' workers!

Jess Cameron



Welcome to our new Committee member – Roz Townsend.

Roz' background is that of an author, podcaster, elder mediator and funeral celebrant. Her podcast, 70+Roz, has recently recorded long conversations with some of our visiting lecturers, and are well worth a listen. You can find them on Amazon or Spotify and we soon hope to be able to provide you with a link. We welcome Roz to ArtsNational and to the Committee.



ArtsNational Molonglo Plains partnerships

Special discounts, offers and opportunities for our members.

Urban Bar and Grill offers a members discount!

Looking for a bit to eat or a coffee before the lecture? There's a smart, new café across the road from our venue and there's a discount on offer if your ArtsNational membership badge is shown. Urban Bar and Grill is a great spot for coffee or lunch, at 109 Monaro Street. Just show your membership badge for a 10% discount.



TBIB TRAVEL INSURANCE

TBIB offers members travel insurance to age 90, including for multiple trips in one year, each of less than 90 days duration,

within Australia and overseas.

Contact TBIB <https://tbibtravel.com.au/>

Email: travel@tbib.com.au Ph: [07 3252 5254](tel:0732525254)

