



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

Wirltu Yarlū Research Seminar

Medium before meaning

Professor Aaron Corn

Over the past half-century, the phenomenological writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964) have challenged Anglophone scholars to think of human cultural expressions as products of our sensory entwinings with the world, and the meanings we ascribe to them as inseparable from our own existence within it. Within the academy, it is the medium of text through which our observations of lived experiences are primarily codified, disseminated and evidenced as veracious representations of our contributions to human knowledge. Yet in the wake of European colonisation in Australia, this mode of knowledge production continues to threaten preexisting Indigenous systems for recording, communicating and evidencing knowledge of the observable world. I contend that the intertwined songs, dances and designs through which Australian Indigenous knowledges are classically codified are no less capable of supporting fact than books, journals and spreadsheets, and show how contemporary Indigenous knowledge-holders can be engaged as equal partners in producing new knowledge by surpassing the academy's default relegation of such media into exceptionalising categories such as 'creative' and 'practical'. Just as Merleau-Ponty theorises that our construction of meaning is inseparably entwined with our sensory perceptions, I show how gnosis and praxis are similarly inseparable in Australian Indigenous modalities of thought, through which knowing is largely understood to be a necessary product of doing.

Venue: Ira Raymond Exhibition Room - Barr-Smith Library

Time: Thursday 5th May 2016 - 12pm to 1pm.
Light refreshments to be served.

Please RSVP: c.jones@adelaide.edu.au or 8313 0132
by 4pm Monday 2nd May 2016



CRICOS PROVIDER 00123M