

Provocation #3

The end of the world has **already** happened

Friday 17 September • 6 to 9 pm

The Lab • 63 Light Square/Wauvi



In late January 2020, Timothy Morton stated on BBC Radio: “We tend to think of the climate crisis as this impending disaster, but we already live in an age of mass extinction caused by global warning... The end of the world has already happened.”

Join our provocateurs as they envision what stands at the limits of our world and beyond and respond to Timothy Morton’s question: “What’s the point? Does anything mean anything if we’re all going extinct?”

6.00 to 6.10	Anna Goldsworthy, JMCCCP Director Welcome
6.10 to 6.30	The Unbound Collective (Ali Gumillya Baker, Simone Ulalka Tur and Faye Rosas Blanch) Opening Keynote Provocation <i>The Unbound Collective are Mirning, Yankunytjatjara, Yidinji/ Mbabaram and Narungga. Our work considers ideas of what it means to be both bound and free; what we are bound to historically and, as sovereign peoples, what we choose to (un)bind ourselves to and from, both now and into the future. The Collective responds through embodied projection and public performance to State Colonial Archives and through this interrogates questions of ethical practice and responsibility. We enact memory and storytelling, sovereign identity and (re)representation. When our ancestors’ voices are heard and listened to, this compels a call and response engagement with broader Aboriginal communities globally.</i>
6.30 to 6.40	Jonathan Dunk Nothing starts with ‘N’ and ends with ‘G’. <p>In <i>The Sense of an Ending</i> (1965), Kermode described apocalypse as immanent rather than imminent to modernity— a judgement which looks questionable today. It’s the end of the world as we know it, and while we don’t exactly feel fine, we’re remarkably biddable. A book purporting to address climate change was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin. That it did so through by dramatizing the bourgeois body and the bourgeois novel is the obvious criticism, but the better one is why the fuck are we writing novels about this, or shortlisting them instead of burning things or building an ark? Morton’s idea—that it’s just too complicated, to simplify parodically—doesn’t convince. The gods and their deaths were sublime, if we’re struggling to imagine this one it’s not because we don’t have the materials; it’s because we don’t want to very much.</p> <p><i>Dr Jonathan Dunk is the co-editor of Overland, and the recipient of the Dal Stevens award and the AD Hope prize. He lectures at Deakin.</i></p>

6.40 to 6.50

Ian Gibbins

The Extreme Politics of Adaptive Endosymbiosis

This is the Post-Anthropocene. This is a dystrophic climate of floodtides and wildfires. This is a coercive politics of surveillance and self-mutable technology. This is a degenerate ecosystem of engineered life forms, synthetic symbionts, neo-genetic humans dependent on novel microbial metabolisms. We adapt to extreme heat, extreme wind, extreme salt. We harvest oxygen. We feed on iron and sulphur. We are bound by physics and chemistry. We must follow the rules... "The Extreme Politics of Adaptive Endosymbiosis" will be presented via a combination of high-definition 10K video, industrial audio, and live vocal performance developed specifically for the giant LED screens of The Lab. Source material will include my internationally acclaimed videos depicting dystopian cities, damaged habitats, and readapted life forms; massively re-processed audio samples of natural and urban environments linked with new video animations; and text written especially for this provocation.

Ian Gibbins is a video artist, poet and electronic musician, living on unceded Kurna land in South Australia. His videos have been screened to acclaim at festivals, exhibitions and installations around the world. His poetry has been widely published, including four books. Until he retired in 2014, Ian was an internationally recognised neuroscientist and Professor of Anatomy at Flinders University. See www.iangibbins.com.au.

6.50 to 7.00

Alex Sutcliffe

6:66am, narrow gate

To say "the end of the world has already happened" changes how we understand, and make, the worlds we live and will live in. This is both a question of social agency and a question of narrative. If "narrative is about what happens next" (Culler, Fulton), what does narrative do when there is no next? Lyric and narrative works such as Ben Lerner's 10:04, Juliana Spahr's "Dynamic Positioning" and Hannah Sullivan's "Repeat Until Time" name minutes or milliseconds to connect our time to historical and ecological time—just as the capitalocene collides the micro-regimented time of trade with the millenarian time of the apocalypse. I propose to ask how these works find transformative possibilities in the emergency temporalities of (late) capitalism. To accept we're living in an apocalypse is only useful insofar as "every second [is] the narrow gate, through which the Messiah [can] enter" (Benjamin).

	<p><i>Alex Sutcliffe is an MPhil student in creative writing at the University of Adelaide. Alex is writing about what narrative can do under crises of futurity, and may even, as per the only stipulation of a creative writing degree, write a narrative.</i></p>
<p>7.00 to 7.10</p>	<p>Jana Norman (Un)fixing our position: onto-ethico celestial navigation in the anthropocene (a 10-point guide)</p> <p>Star light, star bright, First star I see tonight: Wish I may, wish I might Have the wish I wish tonight. Give me 10 minutes and I'll give you - in the form of prose play-acting as poetry—10 reasons why stars can make our past-present-post apocalyptic dreams and wishes come true. This warp-speed decathlon of star-studded critical theories that work to re-place the human within Timothy Morton's envisioned mesh of all that is, is 100% rocket-free. No flight of fancy, I hope to indicate how escaping the lethal binaries of western dualism relies on the magic of the stars: cosmic turnings that ultimately re-turn us back to all our earthly relations. "What's the point?" Morton asks. Becoming a Cosmic Person before it's too late, I answer.</p> <p><i>Jana Norman is a researcher in the humanities at the University of Adelaide. She holds a PhD from the Adelaide Law School and a Master of Divinity from Yale University. Jana's Posthuman Legal Subjectivity: Reimagining the Human in the Anthropocene (Routledge, 2021) deploys critical ecological feminism, posthuman critical theory, agential realism, and a deep time perspective in proposing a non-dualised construct of human identity to inform human-earth relations at law.</i></p>
<p>7.10 to 7.30</p>	<p>Intermission</p>
<p>7.30 to 7.55</p>	<p>Corinna Di Niro and Collaborators Bone Cage</p> <p>Empirical evidence demonstrates that fictional stories can affect real-world beliefs concerning social issues such as gender inequality and family violence (Strange & Leung, 1999). Bone Cage (by Geoff Gillham) is a 25-minute play set in an abandoned post-war, fire devastated landscape. A woman is held captive – living out her days in a cage – dreaming of an opportunity to escape. By integrating immersive technology and live theatre, Bone Cage challenges our understanding of home / environment and our relationship to each other. This performance extends on Di Niro and Gostin's (2019) previous research using virtual reality</p>

	<p>in theatre. It blends interactive 3D virtual sound, LED scenography and digital footage with three live actors to create a compelling performance that enhances the audience experience. Steeped in metaphor, Bone Cage addresses mental health in response to issues of home, freedom and responsibility and questions the purpose of our existence when hope seems lost.</p> <p><i>Corinna Di Niro (Theatre), Andrei Gostin (Film) and Phil van Hout (Sound) share an interest in integrating immersive technology and live theatre to create hybrid art. As creative researchers, they respond to continuous tertiary and government cuts to the Arts by demonstrating Arts as both necessary and valuable. In the wake of neoliberalism and a COVID “new normal”, Di Niro, Gostin and van Hout seek to present theatre that challenges the status quo.</i></p>
7.55 to 8.05	<p>Mandy Treagus The Flight of the Frigate Bird</p> <p>While disasters induced by climate change unfold across the globe, the world has already ended on one Pacific island, Banaba. Named Ocean Island by Europeans, in 1900, Banaba’s soil was found to consist almost entirely of phosphate. Over the course of the next eighty years, the British, Australian and New Zealand company, British Phosphate Commissioners, removed ninety percent of that soil, rendering life largely impossible. In 1945, Banaban islanders were removed from their home in a company ship and taken to the newly purchased Fijian island of Rabi. The reestablishment of Banaban life on the new island, with its vastly different climate and ecosystems, have largely been successful. The adaptations made by Banabans as climate refugees hold lessons for climate refugees, but their ongoing grief is a salutary reminder not just of the role and function of solastalgia, but more deeply, the role of land in the construction of identity.</p> <p><i>Mandy Treagus is of Welsh, Scottish and Cornish descent, and lives on the unceded lands of the Peramangk peoples. She is Associate Professor in English and Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide, where she teaches and researches literature, culture, and visual studies. Her publications include Empire Girls: The Colonial Heroine Comes of Age, and the co-edited collections Changing the Victorian Subject and Anglo-American Imperialism and the Pacific: Discourses of Encounter.</i></p>
8.05 to 8.10	<p>Cynthia Schwertsik Exponential Growth</p> <p>Exponential Growth is a video made post fire, that inserts the human body, head to earth, in the burnt environment. Is it a privilege or is it a burden to attach meaning to life? Locating ourselves in a place, the head planted on the ground,</p>

precariously swaying for balance, breathing and observing the sounds and scents around us. We call it: radical acts of sanity, an acknowledgement of our connection and dependence on all life forms that share the world with us. As the architects of extinction; this is our elegy to life on earth. Who will listen? Upside down, the experience of being stationary, changes the perspective significantly, we place ourselves The exposed skin feels vulnerable and sensitive to the breeze. It is hard to surrender. In the end, there never really was a point, we just made that up for entertainment. We live - we die and in between we stand on our head. (Images Jennifer Hofmann; collaborators: Renate Nisi, Zoe Freney)

Cynthia Schwertsik's art practice includes visual art and contemporary performance with a focus on activating public space through collaborations. She has generated an array of diverse projects across drawing, public art and performance. Her work has been presented across Europe, Australia, South Africa and in the US. Schwertsik holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts (2016) from Adelaide Central School of Art and a Dance Diploma from T-Junction, Vienna. www.cynthiaschwertsik.com.

8.10 to 8.30

Thomas Bristow

Keynote Provocation – A Pacific Tone: Australian Pastoral today

The literary genre 'pastoral' has been overlooked since Renaissance literary theory celebrated epic and tragedy, and placed pastoral as a literary practice for minor poets, or those learning their trade. In Australia, the word 'pastoral' denotes tracts of land, devoted principally to stock raising; it is 'substantially without literary connotations' (Moore, 2016). Perhaps this explains why no book review of this year's Miles Franklin award winner took the time to refer to its subtitle: *A Pastoral*.

Amanda Lohrey's 2021 novel, *The Labyrinth, A Pastoral* demonstrates that empathy migrates towards the foundation of a common humanity that is disclosed by practices of healing. John Kinsella's 2021 collection of poems, *Supervivid Depastoralism* promotes a sensibility of caring for territory that displaces harmony as the defining condition of art. In both texts, contingent congregations of people and creatures animate space; events bring intersubjectivity into conversation with shared destiny. These works suggest that one of the consequences of pastoral literature is to commit time to thinking through an ultimate sense of what we might term 'lasting dispositions.'

Thomas Bristow is the Roderick Research Fellow at James Cook University, Honorary Research Fellow at ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions at University of Western Australia, and a friend of the J.M. Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice,

	University of Adelaide. He lives on an island in North Queensland and edits the journal PAN.
8.30 to 8.40	<p>Patrick Flanery The Negatives</p> <p>A photographer begins to notice that something is amiss. Overnight a neighbour disappears, leaving behind his dog. Other neighbours soon follow. Traffic in her small town is unpredictable, thinning out, returning, waning to nothing. As the photographer finds herself alone, she begins to panic and phones her brother, a psychoanalyst, who urges her to focus on the present, on the living, and to come see him, soon.</p> <p>This presentation from a creative work-in-progress about pandemics (present and historical) combines the textual with the photographic to ask how the politically engaged artist might respond to a moment of crisis, to the failure of those around them to acknowledge the emergency they recognize unfolding, to those catastrophes always already having come to pass.</p> <p><i>Patrick Flanery is the author of four novels, most recently Night for Day (2019) and one volume of creative nonfiction, The Ginger Child (2019). He holds a BFA in Film from NYU and a DPhil in English Literature from the University of Oxford. He has previously been Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Reading and at Queen Mary University of London. He is Chair of Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide.</i></p>

Provocations is a public forum tackling controversies in the arts and humanities. It occurs in collaboration with the [Sydney Review of Books](#) and is made possible through the generous support of the [Hackett Foundation](#).



JMCCCPrlu tampinthe, ngadlu Kurna yartangka panpapanpalyarninthe (inparrinthe). Kurna miyurna yaiya mathanya Wama Tarntanyaku. Parnuku yailtya, parnuku tapa purruna, parnuku yarta ngadlu tampinthe. Yalaka Kurna miyurna itu yailtya, tapa purruna, yarta kuma purru martinthe, purru warriapinthe, purru tangka martulyaiyinthe.

The JMCCCP acknowledges that we are meeting on the traditional land of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today.