

**2nd Memefest    ୩୩୩୩୩୩୩୩**  
**Swinburne Extradisciplinary**  
**Symposium**  
**Workshop ∞ Interventions**

**Swinburne University 21 - 28**  
**November 2016.**

**Symposium<sup>a+</sup>**  
**Presenters + Abstracts**

**Note: The list is not yet complete**  
**and will be updated regularly**

# The pleasure of the Teste

(with apologies to Roland Barthes)

# Pleasure Praxis

## Dr Darren Tofts

The Classical-Gas project, which I produce with Lisa Gye ([www.classical-gas.com](http://www.classical-gas.com)) and its associated promotional albums produced for Memefest, are conceived by a poetics of deliberate misreading. Texts of pleasure, they masquerade as something other, voguing the theft and remaking of data. The talisman for this conceit is the fictional character M. Edmond Teste (familiar from the nebulous fictions of Jorge Luis Borges). Teste is the creation of the poet Pierre Menard, who in turn is the creation of the French symbolist Paul Valéry. Such is the delirious ecstasy of mirrors within mirrors.

The pleasure involved in the apparent autonomy of fictional characters acting independently of their creators is the literary condition of our post-post-modern times; in particular the deceit and conceit of blurring and even obliterating the metaphysical conditions that enable us to reliably know that there is a difference between Shakespeare and Falstaff.

There is pleasure too in the treason of images, of fictions seamlessly blending into reality and masquerading as truth. This vernacular apostasy is no longer a rarity, like finding in the local Op Shop a bootleg album of Elvis and Frank Zappa at the Hollywood Bowl, with Bugs Bunny as Conductor. Sound like fun? You know you want it.

## Dr Oliver Vodeb

The presentation will discuss pleasure as a central element of communication, design and art for social change and propose the concept of Pleasure Praxis.

Departing from the concept of extradisciplinary investigations of communication, design and art- as practiced by Memefest- Dr Vodeb considers Pleasure Praxis as a necessary next step forward. While looking at situations where pleasure meets with conflict the pharmacological aspect of pleasure is used to step away from “paranoid “ interpretations of everyday life, social un/justice and social change and is focusing on the generative potential of the contradiction and both the “positive and the negative” existing along each other.

Pleasure praxis relates – as every day life- to the majority of our activities but it looks at pharmacological aspects of our society and culture as they are a fundamental condition of our existence. If everyday life acts on our totality of life, the pharmacological aspects are fundamental to this totality. Dr Vodeb will look in this context at food and speak about Pleasure Praxis I: Cooking.

# Reframing refugee: Perpetual victim or pleasure seeker

Dr Linda Briskman

Swinburne Institute for Social Research

The paper calls for a new paradigm for asylum seekers and refugees that moves from hapless victim to one that acknowledges agency. In gaining control over lives defined by others, what are the prospects, limitations, harms and benefits? Might the idea of pleasure be a critical turn for those on the receiving end or is it limited to those who gain satisfaction by reaching out? To delve into these questions, the paper takes a two-pronged approach: examining imposed representations of refugees and the interests they serve and discussing the actions of those who endeavor to give pleasure to the 'suffering refugee.'

# Problems of Pleasure In Neoliberal Society

Dr George Petelin

Is pleasure predominantly an instrument of oppression in neoliberal society or is

it a primary site of resistance? Conflicting evidence arises out studies of consumerism, of the role of popular culture, and gender politics. The present paper assesses some of this evidence and proposes conditions under which pleasure may be used for progressive outcomes through radical visual practice.

# Satisfaction Deferred: The Pleasure of Television

Dr Jason Bainbridge

Television, like all media, is a good that is designed to never be completely consumed - where complete consumption is indefinitely delayed by narrative, scheduling, repetition, spin offs and tie ins. Yet the pleasures of television are always expressed in metaphors of food - from the very idea of consumption, to the TV dinner (a pre-packaged, single serving) to bingeing on streaming services (overindulging at a feast). Implicit in this imagery is the suggestion that satisfaction is only ever one more bite away... This presentation explores how the pleasures of television shape us as media consumers. Rather than keeping us passive, or distracted, it is argued that television's pleasure lies in its restless hunger and the corresponding drive that creates in its audiences - constantly seeking deferred pleasure, constantly looking to the next - and the associated risks that brings, for finding contentment or moving to action.

# The Propaganda of Pantone: Colour and Subcultural Sublimation

Kevin Lo

Using colour as an example, specifically Pantone's 2016 "Colours of the Year", this talk critically examines the mobilization of aesthetic pleasure by both counter-cultural and commodifying movements. It traces the popularity of a particular palette of colours ("Rose Quartz and Serenity" as labelled by Pantone), and demonstrates how its meaning shifted across time, and explores the cultural repercussions of these semiotic shifts.

Keywords: Colour theory, Appropriation, Visual Culture, Material Culture, Seapunk, Vaporwave, Softness, Pantone

# Social Pleasure and Design and Social Innovation: Community Work in Greece 2015-2017

## When the laughs go out

### Scott Townsend

In my own work in communities in Florence, Belgrade, and Greece, I use maps and other artifacts in order to understand and develop long-term connections and dialogue in the community, so that my students and I can assist on design projects through principles of 'design and social innovation.' In my talk I will show examples of a long-term project in Greece, working in communities in Cephalonia and Thessaloniki. Topically the projects we are working on now include exhibition design, signage, and information visualization on projects in education, bio-diversity, local history and archaeological research, with students, professors, business people, and those working in NGO's.

How do we frame 'design and social innovation' in ways that are not dominating or objectifying the people we work with? Social pleasure in the community is one factor.

Hegemony is a factor in working in disenfranchised communities. Hegemony is the domination of unique or contextual viewpoints, eliminating differences between dominant and subordinate groups and can operate on the level of nations and global economies as well as in how we work with others 'as designers' or other specialists. The dominant way of "seeing the world" becomes internalized in social and individual identity. I will describe how daily social pleasure was and continues to be a key to 'design and social innovation,' referencing the Greek term 'oikos.' Oikos means not only household or hearth, but also the pleasure of doing work or sharing communality together 'in the household / community.' These daily connections changed the perception of myself (and now my students) in the community, in ways that were unexpected for us (as visual communication practitioners and researchers).

For groups that are disenfranchised, social pleasure provides more than the anger of fighting back against the social forces that are dominating them. Social pleasure in the community creates opportunities for social innovation that spring from unique insights and language. Likewise, for outsiders like myself, and my students, it also is a lens for finding and negotiating a fit between what the outsider may have to offer working in the community

### Jaša Gabrijan

This paper tackles the role of fun, entertainment and mocking in resistance tactics of 90s Serbian social movement Otpor. Otpor was one of main actors who by the end of the year 2000 brought down the autocracy of Slobodan Milosevic. Through "trial and error" approach that spanned for almost a decade, movement's leaders developed a methodology of leading non-violent protests. The fun principle was named »laughtivism«, an amalgam of laughter and activism. Tactics of mocking, satire, distraction, wrapped in recognizable visual identity, made the opposition to regime look "cool" and "sexy". As one of Otpor's leaders stated in an interview: "We wanted to use the techniques of corporate branding. Our model was Coca-Cola". Such advertising and fun approach showed as very efficient and brought pleasure to protesting. Activists enjoyed being a part of the regime change, that resulted in a 5th October 2000 spectacle, where mass demonstrations forced Milosevic to announce democratic, transparent elections. On the downside, the political change didn't bring a social one. A post-coital-depression followed quickly, where dictator was replaced by the dictate of the market. The pleasure experienced during the times of oppression, where everybody enjoyed being anti-system, protester or freedom-fighter wearred off and the laughter slowly died.

Keywords: Social movement, resistance tactics, laughtivism, Serbia, branding

# Food and Communication Design: Teaching Hospitality

## Roderick Grant

The Canadian Social Health systems spends \$20 billion a year on cardiovascular disease, and 26 percent of children are overweight. The average American family throws out \$640 of groceries a year due to spoilage. Our relationship to food has been mediated to the point that we participate in all aspects of our own nourishment as spectacle - but we increasingly do not know how to sustain ourselves through the act of cooking. We watch cooks compete on broadcast television demonstrating incredible techniques, convincing ourselves that the pleasure of watching the spectacle makes up for our ignorance of basic kitchen skills. Can secondary education play a role in changing our relationship to more sustainable eating practices? Student proposals in 4th year design studios at OCAD University in Toronto ask questions of what it means to be hospitable to ourselves, in order that we can be hospitable to others.

# Hospitality, the new world and cine-ethnography

## Andrew Garton

What remains of tradition and cultural practices when a new world beckons, when one's home land has become too dangerous to support you? Drawing on personal family records and media art works created in collaboration with young people with refugee backgrounds I will attempt to describe a story about the pleasures of hospitality that remains embedded in a culture. In doing so I will draw on a cine-ethnography practice that can add to the re-telling of custom for the nuanced now and the generations to come.

# Plaisir to Pleasure; the manipulation of society through language.

## Kristy Lee- Horsewood

Pleasure-ure, pleasure the word as we know it today is an adaptation of language by the English. A middle to late century transformation of an old French word, plaisir – to please.

The English decided that the meaning of the word to describe pleasure or the action of being pleased or pleasing in an external sense should coincide linguistically with abstract nouns like measure, forever altering the landscape of not only English society but also the societies of its colonised territories. Now the definition of the word is infused with capitalism and has an aura of moral ambiguity.

This continent, the land where we stand, was invaded and subsequently colonised and with saying that I must reiterate the unceded sovereignty of first nations people in this land known as Australia.

Along with the continent and the language the colonisation project extended to Aboriginal people and their way of life, Aboriginal children, religion, education, diet and value systems.

English is the dominant language in 2016 and the Westminster system is the dominant system of governance however prior to invasion the concept of pleasure was not predominantly associated with a perception of quantity.

But perhaps more in keeping and better aligned to the old French word Plaisir – to please. Even though the transformation of the word itself was born from the French, Norman and English conflicts and conquests in Europe and beyond.

How the settler population has taken pleasure and defined pleasure on this continent has and will continue to drastically shape the place of first nations people in society and therefore inform their responses, behaviour and especially their perception of self and self worth.

# Pleasure as Being

## Andrew Peters and Josie Arnold

Andrew & Josie will provide a discussion about how Indigenous Knowledge can allow us to better understand the contemporary world around us, and thus see ourselves as vital elements of it. This, in turn, can allow a 'new realisation' of the daily pleasures that contemporary society contains and offers. Focusing on a new short film made with Aunty Joy Murphy-Wandin, Josie will explore her own experiences in seeing sport from the point of view of a Wurundjeri Elder. The film explores aspects of Indigenous women's sport that include being on country, walking and swimming, supporting others of all ages and male as well as female gender, and the joy of play in work. The film presents us with opportunities to enter into the past, present & future, and ways of looking at sport that are grounded in country and culture.

This discussion looks at notions of Indigenous Knowledge through four key areas - relationality, reciprocity, context, and reflexivity – and looks at ways that such perspectives allow us to identify, understand and experience pleasure as a 'normal' and natural way of life.

# Avant-gardening and horticultural politics: how the pleasures of gardening can lead to social transformation

Lisa Gye

According to a recent report by the Australia Institute, over half of households in Australia now grow at least some of their own food, either at home or via a community garden. Unlike ornamental gardening practices, which emphasise the 'image' of the garden and are underpinned by a consumerist desire for status, home food production taps into a more ancient horticultural tradition. Ornamental gardening aligns more closely with agriculture as both are driven by the desire to tame wildness and establish order. Horticulture offers itself as a resistance to or refusal of agriculture which, as Peter Lamborn Wilson argues, has in modern times seen agriculture "enter into the vast complex of the unitary image of

Capital, generated by the global media, ever mutating and changing, and yet paradoxically static and inert."

This paper will explore how the increased pleasure individuals are taking in engaging in domestic horticulture can be activated to raise awareness about such pressing social issues as food security, climate change, excessive consumption and waste. It will also consider how an understanding of Indigenous food practices as horticulture can be used as a tool for decolonization.

# The Pleasure of Reconciliation

Dr Andrew Gunstone

In the past 25 years, there has been a significant reconciliation movement in Australia, through national organisations, such as the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, Reconciliation Australia and Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation, and through a 'people's movement' for reconciliation. This paper examines the motivations of non-Indigenous people engaging in this movement.

# Traditional Ecstasies vs the Commodification of Pleasure

Dr Sam Burch

For thousands of years, virtually every culture on earth has, at one time or another, engaged in ceremonial and ritual practices designed to elicit states of ecstasy, visionary knowledge and supra-sensory apprehension, and trance-like experiences of self and collective transformation and transcendence. Whether through dance, song and music, the repetition of mantras, the ingestion of entheogenic plant medicines (such as Ayahuasca), or a combination of these and other methods, such traditional practices—often, though sometimes inappropriately referred to as “shamanic” in nature—have formed a core component of the material, psychological and spiritual lives and epistemologies (knowledge systems) of the cultures that have engaged them. Though increasingly rare in modern times, and subject to the same destruction that has befallen many First Nations groups and peoples, these traditions still have much to say about the meaning of existence in relationship to the natural world and each other.

However, as I will discuss, contrary to the many contemporary, materialist visions of pleasure and ‘ecstatic states’, which often emphasize the aspirational pursuit of both mundane, ‘simple’ consumptive pleasures, along with more hedonistic desires within a commodified and accumulative culture of wealth and privilege, these traditional methods demand intense discipline and knowledge acquisition, self-sacrifice, taboos on consumption and behaviour, and the rejection of other, and arguably less effectual means. Furthermore, the experiences they engender are often rooted in entirely pragmatic and demonstrable purposes, beyond any superficial conception of ‘tripping’ that may be suggested by seemingly comparable circumstances or contexts.

The contradictions between these traditional systems and the values they imply, and the contemporary capitalist systems and structures which essentially reject them, points to a powerful ongoing dialogue regarding the destructive cost of the ‘pleasures’ we are sold, and the illusory narratives that may continue to dominate the lives of those who choose to deify the mechanisms of greed and corporate driven consumption above all things.

# Soaking my feet in the stories of resistance: Pleasure, Language and Body in political becoming

Dr Vida V. Vončina

I will share my reflections on the stories of resistance and how they influenced my political becoming. The stories of partisan resistance were central to my primary education in the socialist Yugoslavia, they offered a particular pleasure of imagining how being engaged in the world can bring about freedom. I will question the limits and contradictions of being educated in an overtly ideological system. As a critical pedagogue I am interested in experiences that support a person to become a subject of action and responsibility in the world, and how we can use our language, produce texts and use our bodies to interrupt the world and create space for ourselves as well as others to appear as unique human beings, which is a pleasure par excellence. I will offer an example and arguments for a pedagogical practice that allows just that.

# STOP RACISM NOW

## Jafri Katagar

Jafri started the STOP RACISM NOW campaign after being racially vilified, harassed, mistreated and humiliated by a doctor at the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne (RDHM) on the 29th May 2014. Originally from Uganda, Jafri loves Australia which is his home from 2005.

On Fridays Jafri performs a beautiful act of protest in the middle of the crossroad at Flinders Square, just in front the Flinders train station. Very recently Jafri was subject to a brutal police attack where he was without provoking or breaking any law pepper sprayed during his peaceful protest. The violent act sparked more support for the STOP RACISM NOW campaign strengthening Jafri's efforts even more.

Jafri will speak about his personal story, the campaign that he started and invite us to participate in it.

# The Butterfly Effect

## Nina Kelabora

The Welcome to Eltham group started as a bunch of neighbours wanting to extend some old-fashioned hospitality to 120 Syrian refugees soon to join our neighbourhood. A BBQ and a few knitted rugs maybe? We didn't expect to be taking on far-right anti-immigration extremists with cupcakes and butterflies. It's been a wild five months! One by one our neighbours have added their voices to our welcome song. Now our whole community - grandmothers, mechanics, children, business owners, artists, politicians and everyone in between - is standing up to sing "we have room in our town and room in our hearts for refugees". The joy is contagious. Come and chat about our journey so far.