RESONANT RETURNS

Arts-based Research Festival

Tuesday 17th – Saturday 21st November, 2026

MIECAT's Professional Doctorate in Therapeutic Arts Practice course is delighted to host our Arts-based Research Festival once again. For five days, we will immerse ourselves in spaces where arts materials, modalities and forms are embedded into research.

The festival's public events (Tuesday and Wednesday) include: a workshop on sensual film encountering (Regenerative Intimacies); a research training evening on designing meaningful encounters with AI (Sam Hains); a fireside chat following a return from the 2026 ECArte conference (Kim Swan); a presentation on tracing the secret lives of cities (Lachlan MacDowall); and a further research training event, focusing on befriending ethics in auto|also-ethnography. There is no cost to attend these events. However, please register by following the QR codes on the event-specific pages below. You will also see whether events are online, on-site, or hybrid.

This year, we will be back at the MIECAT studios, 374 George St, Fitzroy, Melbourne.

Thursday–Saturday will see our doctoral community–students and candidates, supervisors, alum, MIECAT staff and invited guests– gather to support our Years 1-4 student/candidates as they present their research inquiries to date. These presentations are hybrid.

For our doctoral student/candidates, staff will be on-site Tuesday and Wednesday between 10 am-12 midday and 1:30-5 pm to support the installation of works or discuss presentation needs. If you are arriving on the day of your presentation, please arrive around 9 am to set up or prepare as needed so we can start at 10 am. We are grateful to Dr Jenny Orford Hill for joining us as our external responder.

On behalf of our doctoral supervisor team, I want to thank everyone who contributed to our Prof Doc Seminar Series (subject) this year, of which this festival is part. I also want to give a 'shout-out' to our supervisor, Dr Stacey Bush, for coming up with our festival title once again.

Warmly,



Dr Amanda E Woodford,
Professional Doctorate and Seminar Series Subject Coordinator.

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SENSUAL FILM ENCOUNTERING: A (MULTIMODAL) METHOD THAT TOUCHES ITSELF

REGENERATIVE INTIMACIES
(ELYSA WHELAN AND JAC GRACE)



WORKSHOP–ONSITE ONLY
TUESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER
9:30AM-1PM AEDT (UTC+11) (3.5 HOURS)

ONSITE @ MIECAT, 374 GEORGE STREET, FITZROY–
STUDIO 4–'THE GARAGE'
NUMBERS X 20 PEOPLE (MAX)

Sensual film encountering is an iterative and hyper reflexive method of intimate artistic inquiry. Experienced, produced and exhibited as a projection site and large scale canvas, it engages body as a sensuous and aesthetic material, mark making and filming.

As a hyper reflexive method, it evokes the biological process of "invagination", where within a confined space, bodily organs literally fold in on themselves to increase surface area, creating complex sites for nutrient exchange and generative possibilities. In this artistic method, the MIECAT procedures are queerly folded back in on themselves in the sensuous intra active becoming of film, mark, sound and human relationships.

This method emerged within the collaborative arts research of Regenerative Intimacies (Elysa Whelan and Jac Grace) as they developed their second work together En|Countering Extraction, a reflexive response to their first film Pomegranate Porn.

In this presentational and experiential workshop, participants are invited into an intra active collaboration with Sensual film encountering. There will be the opportunity to entangle themselves with projection, paper and film; witness the method of process and editing live and complete a work together.

Participants will also be invited to experience the work En|Countering Extraction, inquiring into the ways it invaginates the MIECAT approach to inquiry as a method, particularly the generative and material immediacy of expression, key elements description, bracketing, cycles of amplification and reduction and intersubjective responding.

Finally we will lean into this method politically and therapeutically, through the lense of feminist and queer new materialisms, asking why it matters to matter ourselves in these ways together.

You are welcome to witness the process or if you imagine joining in, the invitation is to consider yourself an aesthetic material participant/performer/responder/maker/artist.

The aesthetic curation of the work will be assisted by light coloured clothing to receive the projection. Flesh tones of all bodies, pinks, reds are the colour scape. we will be using watery pigments to colour the canvas so clothing that is not too special in case it stains is idea.

TO BOOK
https://share-ap1.hsforms.com/2IsirFHQ3QCOwNJQOG8-myA7b47ey



DESIGNING MEANINGFUL ENCOUNTERS WITH AI

SAM HAINS
ASSOCIATE LECTURER, MASTERS OF ANIMATION, GAMES & INTERACTIVITY (MAGI)

RESEARCH TRAINING EVENT–HYBRID
17TH NOVEMBER
2:30-4PM AEDT (UTC+11) (1.5 HOURS)

ONSITE @ MIECAT, 374 GEORGE STREET, FITZROY
ON ZOOM

Where do we draw the line between human and machine in creative practice?

This talk places AI within a longer lineage of the games artists have played to get outside themselves. Just as photography unsettled the idea that painting's value lay in likeness, AI asks us to question the value of our hard-earned craft skills. AI can replicate art's surface and style, but the responsibility for meaning-making stays with the artist, whose task remains to communicate something specific and weird about being a human in the world. Sam Hains explores these ideas through two recent video installations that use AI to work with dreams, grief and posthumous collaboration. The talk asks how we might design meaningful encounters with AI systems and offers critical frameworks for approaching AI in creative practice research.

TO BOOK
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FROM MIECAT TO ITHACA AND BACK AGAIN...

DR. KIM SWAN
PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE
IN THERAPEUTIC ARTS PRACTICE,
MIECAT

FIRESIDE CHAT–ONLINE ONLY
18TH NOVEMBER
11:30AM–1PM AEDT (UTC+11) (1.5 HOURS)

ON ZOOM



An invitation to sit around the metaphorical 'fire' together for 90 minutes, to reflect on how the MIECAT approach to therapeutic arts research/inquiry meets an international context of arts therapies in education.

What happens when doctoral research travels beyond the context in which it was conceived, encounters different perspectives, and finds new possibilities for expression and application?

Drawing on my participation in the 2026 European Arts Therapies Conference (ECArTE) in Pula, Croatia, I invite you into a fireside-style conversation/sharing of my experience of bringing MIECAT to the evolving international field of therapeutic arts research and education. Based on the theme,"Ithaca, repetition and return in the arts therapies"- the conference invited delegates to contemplate and experientially explore cycles of return through the lens of our research/practice.

Through stories of preparation and planning, scholarly encounters, emerging research, creative practice and international connections, I'd love to reflect on what MIECAT contributes to this wider landscape, what we might learn from others, and how our research can continue to evolve through relational connections, dialogue and exchange.

This 90-minute gathering will offer an opportunity for shared reflection and conversation, inviting doctoral researchers/candidates and other participants to consider the wider possibilities, connections and contributions emerging through their own inquiries.

Looking forward to seeing you there (online)! *Kim*.

TO BOOK
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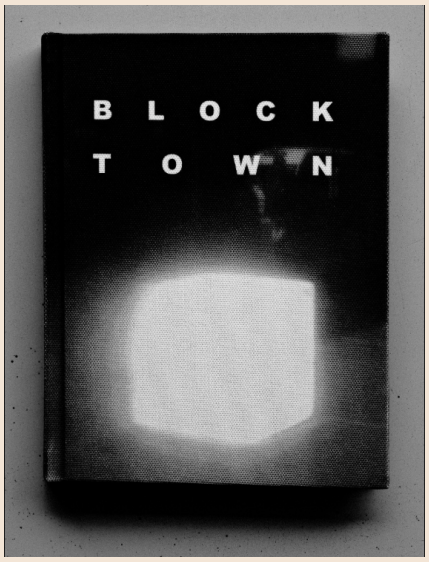
TRACING THE SECRET LIVES OF CITIES

PROFESSOR LACHLAN MACDOWALL
MIECAT

PRESENTATION–HYBRID
18TH NOVEMBER
2-3:30PM AEDT (UTC+11) (1.5 HOURS)

ONSITE @ MIECAT, 374 GEORGE STREET, FITZROY
ON ZOOM

In this presentation we'll look in detail at the ecology of contemporary artist publishing and view some artist books that attempt to register hidden or marginal elements: a failured mission in Tashkent, the smells of Tbilisi, an eventful commute in Seoul, a distant memory of New York. We'll look at how books have worked as symbols of authority and how they can also function to present multi-sensorial counter-histories. I'll also discuss the making and publishing of Block Town, a recent publication about Melbourne during lockdown.



TO BOOK
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BEFRIENDING ETHICS IN AUTO|ALSO-ETHNOGRAPHY

DR DEBORAH GREEN
PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE
IN THERAPEUTIC ARTS PRACTICE,
MIECAT

RESEARCH TRAINING EVENT–HYBRID
18TH NOVEMBER
4-6PM AEDT (UTC+11) (2 HOURS)

ONSITE @ MIECAT, 374 GEORGE STREET, FITZROY
ON ZOOM



Imagine our inquiry assemblages
tentacling beyond
our own selfing|soma|soul|stories
to respectfully, tenderly, attentively
become-with the vital agency of worldings, stories, theories,
lived|living through
not only
fellow humans,
but also ancestral presences,
the thrumming land and Country,
natural and built spaces and places,
arts materials and makings,
and ... and ... and ...

Join Deborah Green for this two-hour long hybrid collaborative thought-experiment attending to the Ethical implications arising when we situate our inquiries within an animate world. All voices, silences, songs, stories and arrivals are welcome as we live into the MIECAT approach via imagically playful multimodal-making+sharing to tease out some (k)new knowings by exploring:

- What is 'auto'ethnography?
- What happens when this 'auto' becomes 'also' – when we trouble the individuated humancentric 'auto' and recognise we're not-so-very separable from the animate everything?
- What tangles then arise within the lively unfoldings of Ethics when 'research participant' billows open to include the other|more-than-human?
- What becomes possible when we invite Ethics themselves to become a companion-critter assisting in our wayfindings through|with the resulting entanglements?

TO BOOK
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PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE SEMINAR SERIES PRESENTATIONS

STUDENTS AND CANDIDATES OF MIECAT'S PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN THERAPEUTIC ARTS PRACTICE

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE COMMUNITY, INVITED FRIENDS AND FAMILY ONLY – HYBRID
19TH NOVEMBER
9AM-5PM

This event will be chaired by Dr Amanda Woodford
Our external respondent is Dr Jenny Orford Hill

10 am start AEDT Melbourne VIC, Australia (GMT+11)

10:30-11:00	**Leuca Jane Ziemons** Year 1
11:10-11:40	**Linda Spencer** Year 2 Human–Canine Interaction: An Arts-Based, Sensory, and Embodied Autoethnographic Exploration of Relationship Dynamics.
11:50-12:20	**RTM** Year 2 Becoming Inquiry, Inquiry Becoming
12.20– 1.50	LUNCH
2:00-2:30	**Lindsey Shepherd** Year 4 Deepening Autistic relationships to self through collaborations with the more-than-human
2:35-3:05	**Michele Fairbairn** Year 4 Oubliette/Lieu de mémoire...a place of forgetting/a place of (re) membering: A creative inquiry into the tussle with relational rupture.
3:20-3:50	**Indigo Melrose** Year 4 Lived Experience of Transitions in Mothering.
3:50-4:20	Presenters fireside chat with Dr Jenny Orford Hill.
4:30 pm	Finish.

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE SEMINAR SERIES PRESENTATIONS

STUDENTS AND CANDIDATES OF MIECAT'S PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN THERAPEUTIC ARTS PRACTICE

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE COMMUNITY, INVITED FRIENDS AND FAMILY ONLY – HYBRID
20TH NOVEMBER
9AM-5PM

This event will be chaired by Dr Amanda Woodford
Our external respondent is Dr Jenny Orford Hill

10 am start AEDT Melbourne VIC, Australia (GMT+11)

10:30-11:00	**Ange Garabelli** Year 1
11:10-11:40	**Lorena** Year 2 Reclaiming Self for Ourselves: An Arts-Based Inquiry into Reawakening After Domestic Violence, Post-Separation Abuse and Systems Failure.
11:50-12:20	**Jac Grace** Year 3 Encountering eros in the context of Modernity. Artistic Experiments Exploring the Entanglement of Safety and Desire and Surviving Modernity.
12.20– 1.50	LUNCH
2:00-2:30	**Anna Paddick** Year 1
2:35-3:05	**Cara Flame** Year 4 An autoethnographic inquiry into the transition from performance to performativity.
3:20-3:50	**Heather Bryant Birkett** Year 4 Wayfinding within the entanglements of caregiver grief towards a new bricolage.
3:50-4:20	Presenters fireside chat with Dr Jenny Orford Hill.
4:30 pm	Finish.

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE SEMINAR SERIES PRESENTATIONS

STUDENTS AND CANDIDATES OF MIECAT'S PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN THERAPEUTIC ARTS PRACTICE

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE COMMUNITY, INVITED FRIENDS AND FAMILY ONLY – HYBRID
21ST NOVEMBER
9AM-5PM

This event will be chaired by Dr Amanda Woodford
Our external respondent is Dr Jenny Orford Hill

10 am start AEDT Melbourne VIC, Australia (GMT+11)

10:30-11:00 **Jessie Brooks-Dowsett** Year 4
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11:10-11:40 **Shev** Year 2
Rendering place for personal and planetary wellbeing: A Slow therapeutic arts practice.

11:50-12:20 **Ava Cormie** Year 2
Embodied Arts As A Way-finding through Complex-PTSD: A Creative Therapeutic Process.

2:00-2:30 **Tiff O'Brien** Year 4
Practitioner wellbeing: Self-soothing inquiry forms while working with the vulnerable self and others.

2:35-3:05 **Brodie Caporn** Year 4
Communing with the Dearly Departed through Song ~ Engaging in the art of songwriting to navigate an experience of abrupt loss and grief, and exploring the potential for relational metamorphosis and continuing bonds (Klass, 1996) through songwriting and other creative practices.

3:10-3:40 Presenters fireside chat with Dr Jenny Orford Hill.

4:30 pm Final packup and farewells.