

# Exhibition Pagoda 2021

## Gang Gang Gallery Lithgow NSW 2790

Speaker Bios (alphabetical order)

### Paul Brown

Paul is a community artist, playwright, and creative producer, also an educationalist, facilitator, author, and researcher. Environmental issues, the link between science and arts, communications and community engagement are central to his projects. Originally trained as a geologist, then also qualifying in history and philosophy of science, Paul has experience in fields of earth sciences, environmental humanities, eco-criticism, creative arts practice and science and technology studies. As a creative writer and producer, mostly of plays and films, Paul is the author of *Aftershocks*, verbatim theatre about the Newcastle earthquake. He co-founded Urban Theatre Projects in 1980, and wrote major community theatre works for Murray River Performing Group, Theatreworks, and Urban Theatre Projects. He is author of the documentary film *Sixty Thousand Barrels*, and of the verbatim play *Half a Life*. In 2014-18 he was the Creative Producer for the Australia Council funded *Nuclear Futures creative partnerships initiative*, linking artists with atomic survivor communities to make creative works across 22 multi-arts projects. His recent work includes an oral history and performance project 'Crowded World' and he is currently developing a new arts project 'Recovery' with the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute.

This Eco-arts project links creative artists with the community of citizen scientists who monitor fire recovery and climate change impacts in the Blue Mountains. Across one year using community arts processes, we will record and develop citizen science narratives, participate in workshops and creative development, and collaborate on presentations of curated image-sound-story, via multi-artform live events and web-based digital arts. The project builds on 15 years of community engagement by the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute and its collaborating organisations, including environmental arts projects. In this new initiative, scientists and artists together will co-produce new ecological knowledge – aiming to transform understanding of the relationship between humans and the rest of nature, while informing environmental decision-making by communities and agencies.

### Yuri Bolotin

Yuri Bolotin is a wilderness explorer, author and environmentalist with over 30 years of experience in the Australian Bush. He regularly leads and takes part in wilderness research expeditions and is a member of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Together with his wife Rae, Yuri also runs BigCi (Bilpin international ground for Creative initiatives), an artist residency program on the edge of Wollemi National Park.

Together with his colleagues and co-authors Michael Keats and Brian Fox (the trio is known as the Bushexplorers), he has recently published the fourth of the series of books about the Wollemi National Park and is also contributing to the publication of a 9-book series on the Gardens of Stone region. Yuri has received the Excellence in Conservation Occasional Award 2018 from the National Parks Association. See also [www.bushexplorers.com.au](http://www.bushexplorers.com.au) and [www.bigci.org](http://www.bigci.org)

### Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen

Sydney based artist Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen uses experimental drawing, listening and sound practices to explore processes of embodied listening. Through interactions with the surfaces, people and atmospheric contingencies of places, Chen examines how expanded drawing practices and listening can engender connections and enact distinct senses of places. As the recipient of the University Postgraduate Award, Chen recently completed a Doctor of Philosophy in Art, Design and Media at

the University of New South Wales Art and Design. Chen has presented her research internationally in England and China.

With work held in private and public collections, Chen has exhibited in Australia and China in solo, group and finalist prize exhibitions. In December 2018, Chen held a solo exhibition and undertook an artist residency at Ningbo Museum of Art, China. In 2017, Chen was selected to exhibit in Beijing's Today Art Museum as a part of Art Nova 100. She was a finalist in the Paddington Art Prize in 2015 and a finalist for the 61st Blake Prize in 2012. Chen has undertaken artist residencies at [Akiyoshidai International Art Village](#) in Japan and [Hill End, Bathurst Regional Gallery](#). Chen is represented by Art Atrium in New South Wales and is currently a resident studio artist at Parramatta Artist Studios.

### **Anne Graham**

Anne Graham is an artist and an academic; she has exhibited in the Adelaide, Brisbane and Melbourne Festivals, the Biennale of Sydney, Perspecta and in many curated exhibitions nationally and internationally. In 2000 Anne Graham completed 'Passage' a major permanent public art work for the City of Sydney. She has created major public artworks for the Tweed River Regional Gallery, Newcastle City Council The Australian National University and Art Front Gallery in Japan. She has worked extensively in Japan exhibiting in three Echigo Tsumari Triennials and producing public artworks in Tachikawa, Iwadeyama and Tokamachi. In 2010 and 2011 she completed residencies at the Redgate Studios in Beijing and exhibited at the 798 Art Precinct. She also completed a residency at Australia House, Echigo Tsumari, Japan in collaboration with TAMA Art University and the Australian Embassy in Tokyo. She returned to Japan in July 2012 to complete a short residency and exhibition in Niigata, in November 2012 she exhibited in Hong Kong and received the Woolmark Award for Creativity. In June 2014 she completed a residency at the Kulturcentrum, Konsthallen, Sandviken, Sweden that culminated in a Solo exhibition. She has recently undertaken a residency for The Katoomba Cultural Centre that will culminate in an exhibition in June 2015. Later in 2015 she will take up a three month residency for The Power Institute of Fine Art, Sydney University, at The Cite in Paris. PhD Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 2007

Master of Art, Royal College of Art, 1973.

Graduate Diploma of Education, West Australian Institute of Technology, 1983.

Diploma Art and Design, Manchester College of Art. 1969

### **Dr Megan Halcroft**

I started my degree in Horticultural Science in 1998 at the University of Western Sydney (UWS), when my daughter Elen was in preschool, graduating in 2004. With a degree in horticulture I worked in garden maintenance for 12 months, a job I decided was for the birds (or at least for someone much younger). I discovered bees, both honeybee and native, while doing the Apiculture unit in the horticulture degree. When I began my Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree, in 2006, I was lucky enough to be given a project which involved the Australian stingless bee *Austroplebeia australis*. I've become intrigued by these little creatures and am very fond of them.

I began my PhD candidature at UWS in 2008, studying *A. australis* and their potential as an alternative (to the honey bee) crop pollinator. I've also been looking at their foraging behaviour and energy expenditure, compared to other Australian stingless bee species. I have been able to gain a better understanding of their life cycle and life span. Under the guidance of and in collaboration with Dr Anne Dollin, of Aussie Bee, we have been working to try and solve some of the taxonomic puzzles posed by the bee species within the genus *Austroplebeia*. One of my greatest pleasures has been meeting and speaking with some of the dozens of stingless bee enthusiasts and experts in Queensland and northern NSW. It's such a pleasure to spend time with people who are so passionate about our native bees.

I submitted my dissertation, "Investigations into the Biology, Behaviour and Phylogeny of a Potential Crop Pollinator: the Australian Stingless Bee, *Austroplebeia australis*", and graduated with a Doctorate of Philosophy in April 2013.

During my many and varied studies I've become more appreciative of the importance of diversity within our lives and our environment. It's been a privilege getting to know our native stingless bees, up close and personal, and I really have come to love them. I now want to share my passion for bees, of all kinds, with other people and increase community awareness of their importance in our lives. Hopefully we can all learn together and, in so doing, help in their conservation.

### **Michael Keats OAM**

When Michael was growing up at Balmoral during the Second World War, the beaches and headlands provided a diversity of experiences - walking, climbing, swimming - as well as opportunities to observe and question the natural world, and to engage in embryonic exploration. At age six, he became the youngest member of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW.

At 60, Michael made exploratory bushwalking his occupation, with abseiling, multi-day pack walking and canyoning adding to the experiences he enjoys. A compulsive chronicler, he documents each walk experience systematically, compiling relevant maps and annotating photographs. When Michael is not in the bush, his time is split between desk and library research. Fifteen years ago, he teamed up with two other remarkable explorers, Brian Fox, and Yuri Bolotin. They became known as the Bushexplorers and established a website that promotes their activities and publications and acts as a free reference to the bushwalking community.

In 2011, Michael was made a Life Member of the Bush Club Inc., "*In recognition of Long and Loyal Service to the Club as a Leader of Walks and an Adventurous Member during many years of continuous membership.*" Further recognition of his bushwalking career came on Australia Day 2016, when he was invested with an OAM, "*For service to bushwalking, and as an author.*"

### **Madi McLean**

Senior Vice President Blue Mountains Conservation Society . Detailed bio to come.

### **Greg Mortimer OAM**

Greg is a farmer in Hartley Vale, a passionate supporter of community initiatives and a keen proponent of new age energy initiatives. He is a founding director of the Lithgow Community Power Project .

By profession, Greg is a geologist and is also one of the world's foremost mountaineers. As a geologist, he has been involved in mineral exploration, as well as geological mapping throughout Australia and Antarctica.

From 1979 to 1984, Greg worked as a geologist, a survival training instructor, and a Scientific Affairs Adviser for the New Zealand Antarctic Division. He has been involved in Antarctic science, tourism and private expeditions since then and is a former chairman of IAATO.

His many achievements in mountaineering include: the first ever ascent of the South face of Annapurna Two in 1983; the first Australian ascent of the North face of Mount Everest, without the use of supplementary oxygen, in 1984; the first Australian ascent of Vinson Massif, the highest mountain in Antarctica, in 1988; in 1990 the first Australian ascent of K2, the second highest mountain in the world: in 1994 the first ascent of Mt Chongtar which was the highest unclimbed mountain in the world: and in 2002 an ascent of Mt Manaslu, the eighth highest mountain in the

world.

In 1988 Greg organized and led the Australian Bicentennial Antarctic Expedition. These journeys have been covered in two documentaries, which have been distributed worldwide - "The Loneliest Mountain", by Film Australia and "Everest - The Australian Assault", by the Australian Television Channel Nine Network.

In 1992 Greg cofounded Aurora Expeditions with his wife Margaret. The company operated ice strengthened ships in the Antarctic and Arctic as well as more conventional ships on Australia's Kimberley Coast and in the Galapagos. He is dedicated to introducing small groups of like minded travellers to these remote places. He has visited Antarctica more than 70 times now. In 2001 and 2002 he led small expeditions which repeated Sir Ernest Shackleton's famous crossing of the island of South Georgia.

He sold Aurora Expeditions in 2008.

Greg's accomplishments have been recognized by the Australian government with the Order of Australia Medal for mountaineering. He is also the recipient of three Australian Geographic Society medals. He is a trustee of the Australian Geographic Society and was a vice president of the Youth Hostel Association.

#### **Dr Richard Stiles**

Richard Stiles has been involved in the Lithgow region for the last 20 years - both as a medical practitioner and environmental advocate. He has an interest in moral philosophy and human sustainability / future life options.

He has found the natural environment in the Lithgow hinterlands to be as rich a playground as any, from many, many years of wilderness explorations around the world. It truly is a natural paradise, and under recognized by many in this city.

It is a region that has many potentialities, and Richard shares the enthusiasm of his other community and environmental colleagues, to see Lithgow reach its full potential - as it moves past the mining phase of its history

#### **Nicholas Tsoutas**

Nicholas Tsoutas is a curator. He is the former Artistic Director of Casula Powerhouse. He is the past Executive Director of Artspace Visual Arts Centre, Sydney and also the past director of the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane and The Performance Space in Sydney.

He curated the 1985 Sydney Performance Perspecta, and has been an adviser to the Biennale of Sydney. Tsoutas has been responsible for the development of a number of watershed projects on the topic of Australian multi-culturalism and post-coloniality.

As a director of four major art centres in Australia; Artspace, The Institute of Modern Art, The Performance Space and The Casula Powerhouse, his main areas of interest and expertise are in the areas of conceptual and installation art, performance art, contemporary postmodern theory and criticism.

#### **Dr Haydn Washington**

Haydn Washington is an adjunct lecturer at UNSW. He has a forty year history as an environmental scientist, writer and activist. He has a degree in ecology, a Masters of Science in eco-toxicology (heavy metal pollution), a Dip. Ed., and a Ph.D. 'The Wilderness Knot' in Social Ecology (2007). Haydn was worked in CSIRO, as Director of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, as an environmental consultant, and as a Director of Sustainability in Local Government. He is the Co-Director of the NSW

Chapter of the Center for the Advancement of a Steady State Economy. Haydn has written books on environmental issues, the most recent being 'Demystifying Sustainability' (2015) and as lead editor of 'A Future Beyond Growth' (2016). Haydn is also keenly interested in geodiversity, especially the pagoda rock formations of the western Blue Mountains.

### **Sheona White**

Sheona is Director of the Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of the Lewers Bequest. She has overall responsibility for artistic programming strategy across the key areas of the Gallery in exhibitions, collection, public, education and community engagement.

White's professional purpose is to explore and develop visual arts advocacy through community, education and public engagement and build an exchange of ideas in the arts. Her aim is to deliver meaningful programs and facilities drawn from needs analysis and sound curatorial rationale. Through her work on community contemporary art exhibitions, late night programming, festivals, concerts and cross generation visitation, White promotes public understanding and enjoyment of art grounded in research and committed to sustainability and inclusion.

White has developed and initiated key programs in many cultural institutions including the National Museum of Australia, the National Gallery of Australia, City of Sydney Libraries, the Art Gallery of NSW, the Museum of Contemporary Art and Wollongong City Gallery.