

Mobility and transcultural approaches in contemporary art discourse: a comparative analysis for Germany/Australia

ABSTRACT: Curators in contemporary art museums in Australia embraced Indigenous art in the 1970s and by the early 1990s art historians too were rising to the challenges this phenomenon posed to their discipline. In Germany, there have been ten exhibitions of Australian First Nations art in major contemporary art museums, from the ground-breaking ‘Aratjara’ exhibition in Düsseldorf in 1993, until the exhibition ‘Daniel Boyd: Rainbow Serpent (Version)’ in Berlin in 2023, the first solo exhibition of a contemporary Indigenous artist ever held in Germany. Of course, a number of additional exhibitions have also been curated at ethnographic museums, such as the Humboldt Forum in Berlin in 2022. Yet today, despite efforts of some curators, there are no Australian Indigenous contemporary artworks on permanent display in German public art museums. Recent paradigms of Australian art historiography, shaped by cross-cultural and collaborative thinking, demonstrate a model of mobility of ideas, whereby the (belated) recognition of contemporary Indigenous art and culture is transforming the art historical discourse. This paper examines some models of art historical practice in Australia and Germany that address Indigenous/non-Indigenous art, in an attempt to identify a transcultural approach for discourse on contemporary Australian Indigenous art in Germany.

BIOGRAPHY: Dr. Lindsay Frost

Lindsay Frost <l.frost@aboriginal-art.de>

Independent researcher, Speyer, Germany

Dr. Lindsay Frost has had multiple research careers: experimental physics research at universities in Australia, Germany and Italy (1983-1995), medical human interfaces (1995-1999), telecommunications (1999-2023), sociology of transcultural acceptance of contemporary Indigenous art (since 2019). In 2022, he co-authored with Elisabeth Bähr a 496-page book, ‘Erzählte Welt. Zeitgenössische indigene australische Kunst’ (Wasmuth & Zohlen Verlag), on the latter topic. Currently he serves on the Board of the European Telecommunications Standards Institute.

BIOGRAPHY: Dr. Catherine De Lorenzo

Catherine De Lorenzo <catherine.delorenzo@monash.edu>

Adjunct Associate Professor at MADA (Monash Art, Design and Architecture), Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

Dr Catherine De Lorenzo’s research broadly examines histories of Australian art, photography, exhibitions and art historiography. With Mendelssohn, Inglis and Speck she co-authored ‘Australian art exhibitions: Opening our eyes’ (2018), which looks at the impact of curatorial strategies on Australian art history. She was a 2020 Research Fellow at MAAS, Sydney, is an Adjunct A/Professor at Monash University, Melbourne, and is on the Editorial Advisory Board of the Journal of Art Historiography and of Visual Studies. In 2022, she was awarded an Australia Council for the Arts grant to undertake research for ‘Cultural connections: exhibitions of Australian art in Europe 1937-2007’, a project being realised with Banjalung curator, Djon Mundine OAM.