

RETHINKING THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

IMMIGRATION MUSEUM LUNCHTIME SEMINAR

12PM – 2PM

MONDAY 2 SEPTEMBER

BYO LUNCH

Although it is widely acknowledged that museums produce experiences, the nature of these experiences has proven to be difficult to formulate and substantiate. In this seminar, three museum scholars attempt to rethink the museum experience through research conducted at the Immigration Museum. The insights emerging from these research projects will be of interest to museum scholars, students and professionals, particularly those working in the areas of visitor research, concept development, exhibition design, interpretation and education.

PROF LAURAJANE SMITH (AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY)

The paper draws on 133 interviews conducted in late 2010 with visitors to the Immigration Museum as part of a ARC funded research project on the identity and memory work that visitors undertake at a range of different genres of museums in the US and Australia, including museums of immigration. The talk will provide a brief overview of the results of the work undertaken at the Immigration Museum and place those findings within the wider context of the overall project.

DR PHILIPP SCHORCH (DEAKIN UNIVERSITY)

Drawing on a long-term narrative study of Australian visitors to the Immigration Museum, the paper explores the meaning-making processes of museum visitors, who entangle meaning, memory and belonging in a complex web of interpretive negotiations, and transform cosmopolitanism from an abstract normative ideal into a lived and interpreted reality. The findings suggest that a cosmopolitan museum practice could open interpretive spaces for shifting subjectivities across differences and commonalities, thus loosening the restricting notions of ethnicity and multiculturalism.

A/PROF ANDREA WITCOMB (DEAKIN UNIVERSITY)

Exhibitions are no longer just about the recognition and representation of cultural diversity. Increasingly, exhibitions aim to get audiences to feel in order to imagine and empathise with those they are not. The paper suggests some of the contours of this new form of pedagogic strategy - that of feeling - with reference to the *Identity: Yours, Mine, Ours* exhibition.

IMMIGRATION MUSEUM THEATRETTE: 400 FLINDERS STREET, MELBOURNE

ENTRY: FREE

MUSEUM ENTRY: \$10 ADULTS, CHILDREN FREE

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