

OBJECT SUBJECT

National Design Writing Conference

2019 KEY SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED

The DESIGN Canberra festival has announced leading writers who will explore, debate and address design responsibilities – past, present and future – at the 2019 Object Subject national design writing conference.

At the inaugural national design writing conference, Object Subject (2017), keynote speaker and NY Times design critic Alice Rawsthorn called on the design sector to take seriously their responsibilities – social, environmental and ethical. This clarion call, teamed with multiple requests from national and international design writers to repeat the event, is a catalyst for the second design writing conference in Canberra on 8-9 November 2019.

International and national speakers include: experimental materials research designer Seetal Solanki (London), arts editor Jennifer Higgie (London), Indigenous architect, lecturer and advocate Jefa Greenaway (Melbourne), urban design researcher and editor of Assemble Papers, Jana Perković, and awarded Australian singer, writer, director, and advocate Robyn Archer.

Registration is now open to attend this important conversation. Early bird registration rates are available until 23 September 2019. Speaker proposals are open until 2 September 2019 and the final conference program and full speaker list will be released in mid-September.

Presented as part of the popular DESIGN Canberra festival, Object Subject: 2019 National Design Writing Conference will build on the successful inaugural event, which inspired new conversations, connections and ideas, questioned the very role and responsibility of design, and resulted in the publication of a special issue of the international scholarly journal, Fusion.

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Seetal Solanki is a London-based Founder and Director of materials research design studio Ma-t-ter and a Visiting Tutor on the Interior Design programme at the Royal College of Art. Her work explores alternative methods of employing and implementing materials more responsibly across industry (including IKEA, Selfridges, Unilever) and education. She is the author of *Why Materials Matter: Responsible Design for a Better World*, a stimulating catalogue of possibilities and a timely manifesto on how to consume, manufacture, and design for a better future. Through the lens of intriguing projects by designers, artists, makers, and scientists, it presents a colourful panoply of ideas, technologies, and creative efforts that focus on the earth's most basic elements, while also showing how these elements can be transformed into entirely new materials.



Jennifer Higgle is a staff writer and Editor at Large of *frieze* based in London. She is the author of the novel, *Bedlam* (Sternberg); editor of *The Artist's Joke* (Whitechapel / MIT Press); and the author and illustrator of the children's book *There's Not One* (Scribe). She is also working on various screenplays, writing a book on women's self-portraits since 1548 titled *The Mirror & the Palette* and is the presenter of the *frieze* podcast *Bow Down*, which highlights women in art history. Earlier this year, she contributed an essay to Angelica Mesiti's catalogue for her representation of Australia in the Venice Biennale.



Jefa Greenaway is the Director of Greenaway Architects, with more than two decades exploring the intersection of engagement, Indigeneity and the built environment across private, commercial and educational projects. Jefa is also a Lecturer at the University of Melbourne, focussing on Indigenous curriculum development. His project *Ngarara Place* was exhibited in the Australian pavilion at the 2018 Venice Biennale and he is the founding chair of the not-for-profit advocacy group *Indigenous Architecture + Design Victoria*, and co-author of the award winning *International Indigenous Design Charter*.



Jana Perković is the editor of *Assemble Papers*, Melbourne-based magazine for small footprint living across art, architecture, design, environment, urbanism and financial affairs. She is also a widely published theatre and dance critic, specialising in the intersections between human movement and urban space, and is currently a PhD candidate at the *Connected Cities Lab* at The University of Melbourne. She moonlights as the contemporary dance critic with *The Age*.



Robyn Archer AO FAHA is a singer, writer, director and public advocate for the arts. She has released twelve albums, the most recent in 2019 being *Classic Cabaret Rarities* and currently tours four song recital programs *Que Reste-t'Il*, *Dancing on the Volcano* and *The Fortunes of Exile* (both German) and *The Other Great American Songbook*. Robyn began the Artistic Direction stream of her career in Canberra for the National Festival of Australian Theatre in 1993, and returned to direct the 2013 Centenary of Canberra which inspired fresh looks at the city and its historic and contemporary design credentials. Robyn's lifelong interest in architecture includes *Architektin*, a play she wrote about Margrete Schutte-Lihotsky.



Kevin Murray is a leading voice in Australia's craft and design community and an independent writer and curator. He is Managing Editor of *Garland Magazine* and the *Online Encyclopedia of Crafts in the Asia Pacific Region*. He is currently a Senio Vice-President of the *World Craft Council Asia Pacific Region*, coordinator of *Southern Perspectives* and *Sangam: A Platform for Craft-Design Partnerships*. He teaches at RMIT University, the University of Melbourne, Swinburne University and University of New South Wales.

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CALL FOR SPEAKER PROPOSALS

Calling designers, writers, bloggers, publishers, researchers, collectors and design lovers. Object Subject: 2019 National Design Writing Conference is an international platform for writers to address design as a positive change agent in society. Conference sessions proposals can be submitted until 2 September 2019.

Proposals are welcomed for presentations in a range of accessible and more formal formats including papers (20 minutes), public conversations and panel discussions. All proposals must be submitted through the Craft ACT submittable page.

KEY DATES

2 September: Deadline for speaker proposals (including papers, panels and presentations)
9 September: Notification of accepted proposals
23 September: Early bird registration closes
30 September: Bursary applications open
7 October: Deadline for full papers (where applicable)
3 November: Registration closes
8-9 November: Conference

REGISTRATION & FEES

Early bird: \$190.00 (save \$100 off full price registration until Sunday 23 September 2019)
Speakers: \$190.00
Full registration: \$290.00
Student: \$120.00

[Register now](#)

BURSARIES

From late September, bursaries will be available for students (at any level), as well as emerging practitioners and emerging arts workers in their first 5 years of practice. Bursaries are awarded by application.

Bursary recipients receive free conference registration and are required help out with a few tasks at the conference – checking tickets, social media, set up etc. The work is shared by the bursary recipients and we ask nothing onerous, in fact it is a nice way to support the event and get to know people.

PUBLICATION

All papers submitted to Object Subject will undergo a peer-review process. Selected papers from the conference will be published in an online edition of Fusion journal (established by Charles Sturt University and the University of Lincoln, UK). This publication will investigate the contribution that contemporary craft and design makes to society, and establish a dialogue between craft and design practice and cultural, social and environmental concerns. Read the 2017 Object Subject Special Edition of Fusion Journal [here](#).

All questions about submissions should be emailed to designcanberra@craftact.org.au