Call for papers

“Patrick White and Beyond: Aesthetic Modernism and Australian Theatre”

A symposium to be held at the University of Melbourne on 23–24 July 2015.

This one-day symposium aims to critically reappraise the legacy of Patrick White's theatre around the question of aesthetic modernism in an Australian and international context. It asks questions about the extent to which renewed interest in modernism produces new readings of White’s theatre. It asks if White's theatre, unlike his novels, has been eclipsed by the international focus of modernist drama studies. To what extent has the naming of a specifically Australian modernist aesthetic been deferred by debates about naturalism and realism?

We are especially interested in papers that encompass the leading companies, directors, actors and designers who have staged White’s plays, or that re-examine successive critical and scholarly debates about the playwright and his legacy. Recent productions of the plays suggest there is more to discover, that they remain open to formal innovation and address themselves to contemporary aesthetics and technologies. How present are the plays?

Participants might reconsider themes such as the fragmentation of narrative, the acceleration of time, the condensation of space, the material world, the crisis in social identity and the demise of the natural and spiritual world. The symposium will not only investigate White’s theatrical modernism but will also consider grounds for the broader recognition of Australian theatre's contribution to debates about modernism and modernity.

Papers presented at the symposium will be considered for publication.

Keynote speaker to be announced.

Topics may include:
- Performed modernisms
- Theatre and modernity
- Modernist spaces, modernist turns
- Aesthetic modernism
- Modernist legacy
- Philosophy and theatre
- Sexuality and gender
- The Absurd
- Expressionism
- Alienation
- Madness and Civilization
- Genealogy and legacy
- Reading the Archives
- Theatre and Phantasmagoria
- The poetics of space in Australia, the suburb and the desert.

Abstracts of 150 words no later than 31 March, 2015 to Sandra D’Urso: sandra.durso@unimelb.edu.au

The Patrick White Symposium is convened by Denise Varney Co-director of the Australian Centre, University of Melbourne. It forms part of an ARC Discovery Project.

The Australian Centre aims to develop innovative research projects in the Australian arts and humanities across a range of disciplines, including Art History, Theatre Studies, Literary Studies, Cultural Studies, Media and Communication, Cinema Studies, Indigenous Studies and Creative Writing.

For further information please contact Amanda Morris: aust-centre@unimelb.edu.au or phone 03 9035 5280

http://australian-centre.unimelb.edu.au/