

Our 7th Oration was held at History House on Sunday 9 November 2025.
Our guest speaker was Dr Wendy Garden

Wendy obtained her doctorate from the University of Melbourne. She is Head of Audience, Education & Learning at the Museum & Art Gallery of the NT and is President of the Australian Museums & Galleries Association, NT Branch. Her research and writing interests have focused on photographic portraiture in India and Australia and the photomedia reinterpretations of nineteenth century photographs by contemporary artists.

Wendy's talk was titled "Capturing time past and present: the McArthur River Mine in visual representation"

The expansion of the McArthur River mine cut the tail of the Rainbow Serpent in half, poisoned the surrounding waterways, the town camp water supply and caused the death of 400 cattle.

Aggrieved by the contamination of his ancestral lands, Garrwa elder Jack Green created confronting paintings that brought attention to the environmental damage caused by the mine. He enlisted Darwin based artist Therese Ritchie to create portrait photographs of people from Borroloola who were affected by the ecological threat. The exhibition *Open Cut* opened at the Northern Centre for Contemporary Art in 2017 followed by the online exhibition *Lead in My Grandmother's Body* in 2020.

This led to collaborations between Green, Ritchie, Garrwa/Yanyuwa artist Nancy McDianny, Garrwa/Gangalidda artist Stewart Hoosan and anthropologist Sean Kerins. Their exhibitions drew upon oral histories of settlement to contrast the fast violence of colonial dispossession with the slow violence of environmental poisoning. With the permission from the artists, Wendy discussed and showed a selection of the artists' works.



Peter & Libby Siebert, Wendy Garden, Merry Cooper & Allan Mitchell



Marnie Cameron, Elaine Hellyer & Penny Baird



Mark Ames, Libby Siebert & Merry Cooper



Allan Mitchell, Jared Archibald & Ian Anderson



Albert Foreman & Jeremy Hemphill



Kevin Coonan with John & Sunny from the RSL



Ian Anderson & Derek Pugh



Peter Siebert & Wendy Garden



The audience



Jeremy Hemphill & Mark Ames