

# BATAVIA

GIVING VOICE TO THE VOICELESS





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GIVING VOICE TO THE VOICELESS

LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY  
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GERALDTON REGIONAL ART GALLERY  
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## The history

### The story of the *Batavia*

Alistair Paterson

The Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC, for United Dutch East India Company) vessel *Batavia* was wrecked on the Morning Reef in the Houtman Abrolhos Islands off the coast of Western Australia on 4 June 1629. It was the first VOC ship to be lost off the coast of the Southland (as Australia was then known by the Dutch), although the hazards were already known from Dirk Hartog's voyage in 1616. The wreck of the *Batavia* was immediately calamitous, leading to accidental deaths, mutiny and the mass murder of over 100 souls. Only 115 of the 341 people who left the Netherlands would ultimately arrive in the East Indies. The story became popularly known in the seventeenth century with the publication of *Ongeluckige Voyagie van't Schip Batavia* (1647), which was taken from the journals of the commander, Francisco Pelsaert, and it has become infamous in the annals of Australian and Dutch maritime history.

On the morning of 4 June 1629 the *Batavia* survivors found themselves in breaking surf on the edge of a large reef in the Indian Ocean – the Australian continent lay eastwards over the horizon. Of the 282 people who survived the wreck, most ended up at a nearby small coral island that later became known as 'Batavia's Graveyard' (now Beacon Island).

The *Batavia's* captain Ariaen Jacobsz was under the authority of Commander Francisco Pelsaert, responsible to the VOC's interests and profit. Jacobsz and Pelsaert had control of the ship's longboat, and watched the desperate situation on Beacon Island where over 200 people gathered with little water. Many others clung to the wreck where over 70 people looted supplies – 40 people drowned when the *Batavia* collapsed, or while attempting to swim to the islands. On Beacon Island around 30 people died of dehydration in the days following the wreck.<sup>1</sup>

Seeing little prospect for survival Pelsaert, Jacobsz and 46 others set sail in the ship's longboat towing a smaller boat, with the

intention to locate water on the Australian coast. However, they found the Australian coast inhospitable and decided to sail the remaining 900 miles to Batavia in the East Indies, arriving one month later, when Pelsaert was directed to mount a salvage and rescue voyage.

The survivors of the *Batavia* spent three and a half months (4 June–17 September) on several islands of the Wallabi group prior to the arrival of Pelsaert's rescue mission in the vessel *Sardam*. In these months the number of survivors was more than halved as a result of a bloody mutiny led by the under merchant Jeronimus Cornelisz. Well before the wreck occurred there had been serious dissent on board the *Batavia*. The group of dissenters, including Jeronimus Cornelisz and other crewmembers, had planned a mutiny, and following the shipwreck and the departure of Pelsaert and the senior officers, Cornelisz, as the most senior person left, took control. During this period they were divided into two main groups; those under the dominance of Cornelisz and the mutineers based on Beacon Island, and those with a group of soldiers led by Weibbe Hayes, whom Cornelisz had exiled on the distant West Wallabi. He had directed the soldiers in search of water, removing their weapons before they left. On 5 July Cornelisz appointed his own council, whose members accelerated illicit murders through drowning and assault. Over the following six weeks the open killing spree continued - at least 115 people were killed.

The main resistance to these events was from the group of soldiers who had been sent to High Island (West Wallabi Island). Survivors joined this community of resistance. The mutineers attempted to coerce the soldiers; instead Cornelisz was captured and four mutineers killed. As the remaining mutineers attacked the soldiers on 17 September, Pelsaert's rescue vessel *Sardam* arrived, and the mutineers were duly captured.

The *Sardam* was equipped to salvage the wreck site, using specialist divers from Gujarat. Meanwhile Pelsaert oversaw the trial of the mutineers. Seven, including Cornelisz, were taken to Seal Island and punished with death. Of the original 316 listed travellers only 115 survived. Pelsaert died the following year, never to know how the fame of the story grew over the centuries.

The loss of the *Batavia* in 1629 and subsequent mutiny is one of the most dramatic events in Dutch and Australian history. The National Heritage Listed remains are the earliest European sites in the nation. From the 1960s, interest about the *Batavia* relied almost entirely on the discovery and subsequent translation of Pelsaert's journal through the offices of Henrietta Drake-Brockman. The original handwritten journal now held in the Dutch National Archives was published in Drake-Brockman's *Voyage to Disaster*<sup>2</sup> which has been followed by later historical works by van Huystee and Ariese. Unsurprisingly, the *Batavia* has inspired more recent popular accounts.<sup>3</sup>

Historical research by Drake Brockman led to excavations on Beacon Island in 1963, where burials and seventeenth century Dutch artefacts were found, and the wreck site was located.

In 1972 the WA Museum instigated archaeological investigation on the wreck, and parts of the hull and cargo were retrieved, conserved and eventually displayed in Fremantle in the Shipwrecks Gallery.<sup>4</sup> Early archaeology was focused on the marine sites and in particular the removal and conservation of the surviving structure of the wreck itself. More recently the focus shifted to the land-based archaeological sites related to the *Batavia* and led to National Heritage Listing.<sup>5</sup>

The Australian Research Council (ARC) project, *Shipwrecks of the Roaring Forties: A Maritime Archaeological Reassessment of some of Australia's Earliest Shipwrecks*, has excavated several new burials of the victims using a range of scientific ground sensing technologies. The recent work has discovered the remains of at least 14 victims of the wreck of the 200 individuals who died on Beacon Island, taking the total of known discovered remains to 25. New technologies such as isotopic analyses on bones are providing insight into the lives of these people, revealing where they were from in Europe, and aspects of their life history before

the 'unlucky voyage'. Furthermore, on West Lewis Island there is evidence of the resistance campaign mounted by the small group of soldiers, and on Long Island survey has revealed the site where seven mutineers were executed.

1. C. Ariese, 'Databases of the people aboard the VOC ships *Batavia* (1629) & *Zeewijk* (1727): An analysis of the potential for finding the Dutch castaways' human remains in Australia', *Special Publication No. 16, Australian National Centre of Excellence for Maritime Archaeology*, Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Museum, 2012, p. 5.
2. H. Drake-Brockman, *Voyage to Disaster: The Life of Francisco Pelsaert*. Translated by E. D. Drock, University of Western Australia Press, Perth, 1963.
3. H. Edwards, *Island of Angry Ghosts*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1966 & M. Dash, *Batavia's Graveyard*, Phoenix, London, 2003.
4. J. N. Green, 'The VOC ship *Batavia* wrecked in 1629 on the Houtman Abrolhos, Western Australia', *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration*, 1975, 4, pp. 43–63.
5. C. Souter, R. Anderson, T. D. Campbell, A. G. Paterson & W. Van Duivenvoorde, Report on the 2007 Western Australian Museum, Department of Maritime Archaeology, *Batavia Survivor Camps Area*, National Heritage Listing Archaeological Fieldwork, Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Museum, Fremantle, 2007.

#### Further Reading

M. Dash, *Batavia's Graveyard*, London, Phoenix, 2003.

F. Pelsaert & J. V. Vliet, *Ongeluckige voyagie, van't schip Batavia, nae de Oost-Indien, uytgevaren onder den e. F. Pelsert. Nevens een treur-bly-eynde ongheluck, des Oost-Indische compagnies dienaers in't jaer 1636. weder-varen, in't conincklijcke hof van Siam, in de stad Judia, onder de directie van den e. J. van Vliet. (Gelijck sulcks by den sehigen J. v. Vliet beschreven ende herwaerts over-gesonden is). Als mede de groote tyrannye van Abas, coninck van Persien, anno 1645. Alles dorr een liefhebber uyt verseheyde sehriften te samen ghestel*, Amsterdam, 1647.

M. Van Huystee, 'Historical evidence of the *Batavia* mutiny: Beacon Island expedition', in M. Stanbury (ed.) *Abrolhos Island Archaeological Sites: Interim Report*, Australian National Centre of Excellence for Maritime Archaeology, Fremantle, 2000, pp. 11-14.











## The exhibition

### *Batavia: Giving voice to the voiceless*

Ted Snell

University-based art museums directly contribute to the culture and society in which they exist, and through their professional and scholarly work they are significant and essential contributors to the research, teaching and engagement mission of their hosts. As Gerhard Casper, President of Stanford University explains:

Like the library and the laboratory, the museum should be a vital resource for inquiry, scholarship and enjoyment. Studying works of art can enrich the understanding of different epochs, cultures and human experiences and can ennoble the minds and spirits of members of our community.<sup>1</sup>

That three-fold mission of providing a centre for teaching and research while concurrently enriching community life remains a catalyst for projects developed within the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery (LWAG). It also showcases the commitment to its role of custodians and interpreters of our visual cultural heritage.

University-based art museums are also service units, supporting, challenging and publishing the activity generated within the institution. These partnerships provide exciting research opportunities and are the basis for some rich interdisciplinary engagements. The *Batavia: Giving voice to the voiceless* project was developed within the charged environment of the University of Western Australia, where ideas find willing partners and scholars are fired by the passion and erudition of their colleagues.

Like so many projects at the LWAG, the campus partner for the exhibition was a discipline area within the University, renowned internationally for its scholarship. The idea was generated initially by a conversation I had with a colleague from Edith Cowan University, Dr Paul Uhlmann, who spoke enthusiastically about the new archaeological discoveries on Beacon Island. I

was able to introduce Paul to Professor Alistair Paterson, ARC Future Fellow in Archaeology, and the exhibition materialised from those initial and subsequent conversations.

The major premise that shaped the project arose from our joint musing on how our various fields of inquiry reconstruct history. The horrendous story of the murder of 125 men, women and children following the wreck of the Dutch VOC ship the *Batavia* in 1629, is reinterpreted in this exhibition through the work of the archaeologists at UWA and the creative vision of Paul Uhlmann and Robert Cleworth. Following the archaeological discovery of new burial sites with skeletal fragments, Paul, Robert and Alistair, in collaboration with Corioli Souter, Paul Bourke, Daniel Franklin, Jeremy Green, Jan Andriess and Maarten de Kroon, all contributed to a re-examination of how our understanding of history is framed within different disciplines of investigation, and how these nuanced interpretations impact on our reading of past events.

The exhibition presents installations of new forms of contemporary *memento mori* created by Paul Uhlmann and Robert Cleworth, in response to an obscure painting by the Dutch painter Torrentius (1589-1644), who had close connections to the *Batavia* mutineers. Their re-imagining of these heinous events, together with the re-interpretation provided by Corioli Souter and the documentation of the archaeological dig on Beacon Island, generate a nexus between science and art. Together, their work presents a collective understanding of the *Batavia* wreck through photogrammetry, scanning (X-Ray, MRI), digital prints, virtual tours, the mechanics of the camera obscura, artists' books and paintings.

Academic and public programs extended the outreach and community engagement of the project. In collaboration with the Institute of Advanced Studies and the Discipline of Archaeology,



the LWAG organised a one-day symposium that drew together researchers from within the University, the Western Australian Museum, and the participating artists to expand on the themes extrapolated within the exhibition. During the run of the show, there were also artist talks, panel discussions, educational activities directed at primary and secondary schools, and workshops that attracted both a general and an academic audience.

The programs presented by the LWAG provided students and the wider community with opportunities to better understand and celebrate its cultural heritage. For Western Australians, the story of the *Batavia* is one of the most memorable and significant, in that it charts the first European engagement with the continent, a century and a half before the better known British explorers trawled along the eastern seaboard of Australia. That vibrant history came alive in the works created by Paul Uhlmann and Robert Cleworth, and in the research undertaken by the discipline of archaeology. The exhibition framed those narratives in tandem with the documentation by Paul Bourke and Jeremy Green, the documentary film of Maarten de Kroon and Corioli Souter's insightful installation.

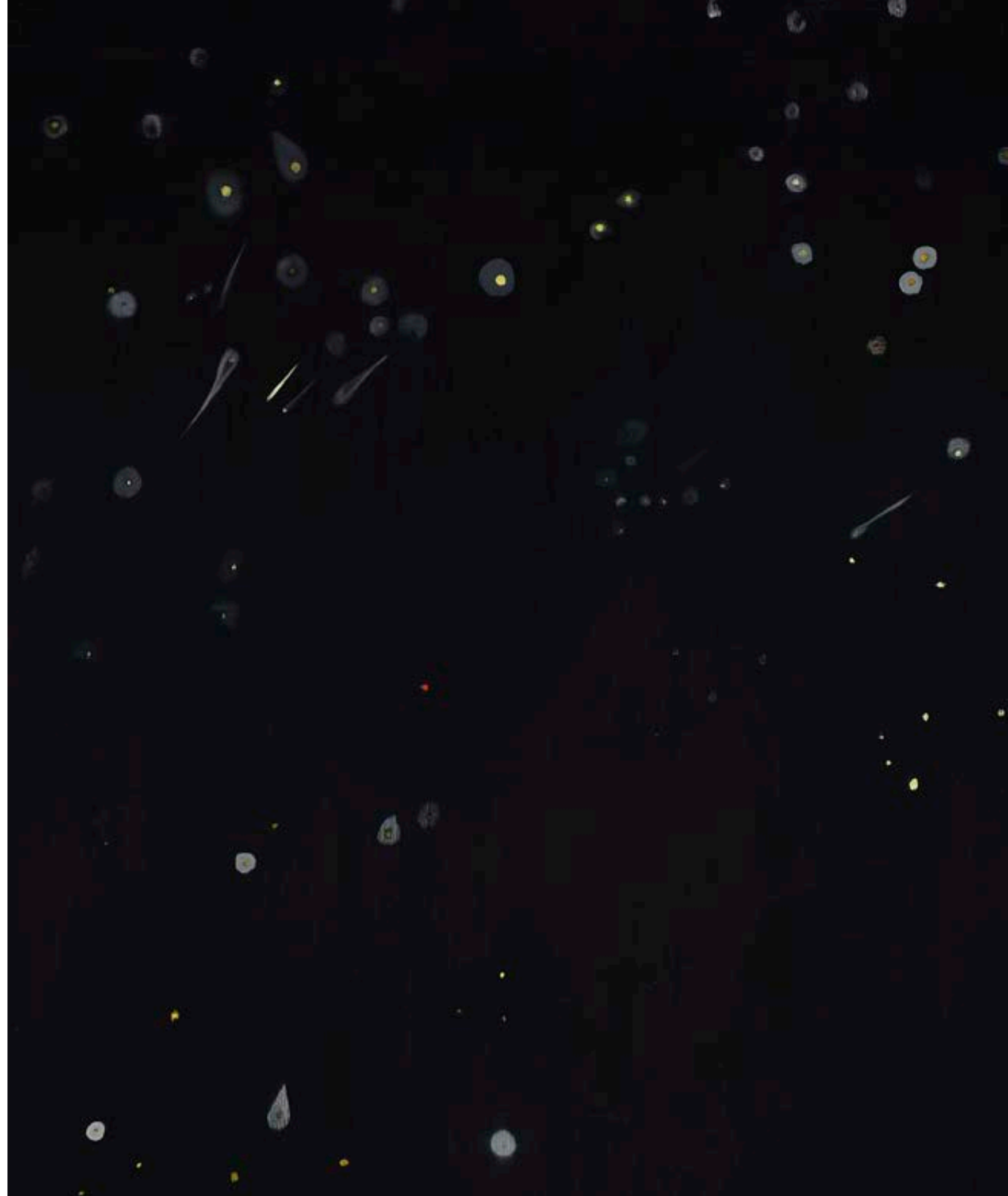
All inspiring projects grow from shared passions, and within the environment of a university, these ideas are given full reign. Introducing Paul Uhlmann to Alistair Paterson was the spark that ignited a series of conversations and interactions that led to an exhibition, a symposium, lectures, talks, workshops and eventually to this publication. Together, these activities constitute a rich and expanded field of research disseminated on various platforms. Through the press, journals, social media and in face-to-face exchanges, the research activities of staff at the University of Western Australia, Edith Cowan University, the WA Museum, and others working further afield have found new audiences. In this sense, the University Art Museum is an

intellectual hothouse where ideas find new and marvellously diverse forms of discursive dissemination.

Based on the premise that research activities in one field are nourished through engagement with others, the project showed how this process could lead to the development of new knowledge and the formulation of new understanding. It was a dynamic and at times breathtaking rollercoaster ride that opened up directions for future exploration and provided participants with a sense of enthusiasm for collaboration across disciplinary boundaries.

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1. Quote by Gerhard Casper, President Stanford University, from R. Joncas, *Building on the Past: The making of the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Centre for Visual Arts*, 1999, Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University, Stanford, p7.









## The concept

### Visible and invisible realms of the *Batavia* story: Investigating new forms of contemporary vanitas through archaeology and art

Alistair Paterson & Paul Uhlmann

This collaborative project and exhibition has been an investigation through archaeology and art to explore new perspectives with which to interpret the *Batavia* wreck of 1629 and subsequent mutiny. A unique touchstone for this project has been the painting by Torrentius, *Emblematic Still Life painting with Flagon, Glass, Jug and Bridle* (1614). This painting, which exhibits qualities of a black mirror, may be considered to be closely associated with works of *vanitas*, as it has many layers and hidden meanings. *Vanitas* images, which had their apogee in the seventeenth century, interpret the religious concept of the world existing in almost two halves – the visible and the invisible. The visible world is forever changeable, all that is flesh, all knowledge and beauty is impermanent and nothing but empty vanity, while the invisible world promises stability with an everlasting life with God. Such philosophical works perform a double movement of interpretation, depicting a false image of reality while simultaneously concealing the message of divine salvation and eternal truth.<sup>1</sup> To create an illusion which was more real than earthly reality was part of the conceit of this genre. Everyday inconsequential objects such as lamps, books and flowers were often contrasted with skulls or bones and all were painted in exquisite detail in order to provoke wonder and to stimulate moral reflection. In this sense these were works of provocation; the viewer's task was to generate meaning through interpretation of symbols.

We present our works as new forms of *vanitas*, which in turn also represent realms of the visible and invisible. The invisible realms we seek to reveal do not speak of the divine, rather they open windows of our shared humanity through science and wonder onto the past and present. We intend these works to be contemplative portals which enable the viewer to ask questions and seek to know more not only about the story of the *Batavia* but also of the period of trade and navigation of the early part of the seventeenth century where new worlds were being opened.

This was a period of flourishing within art and science, which we find has great resonance today where once again art and science are becoming profoundly interlinked.

Over recent years on Beacon Island at least 14 *Batavia* victims were discovered in various communal and single graves. Some bore clear physical evidence of traumatic murder. In 2015 four new burials were discovered, with skeletal fragments from at least one other individual. In 2016 and 2017 further discoveries were revealed on Beacon Island with the discovery of a grave with at least seven people buried together. This means that the mortal remains of around 25 victims of the *Batavia* have been discovered to date. Ongoing archaeological work on these historically significant remains attempts to understand their life history, the nature of their deaths, and through inference, possibly who they were. The analytical methods are largely forensic – encompassing anatomical characterisation, isotopic, genetic, and molecular analyses. Visualisation is a critical technique, encompassing photographic recording, photogrammetry, scanning (X-Ray, MRI), and digital visualisations such as facial reconstruction and virtual tours of the island and burials.

Archaeology applies empirical methods that seek to reveal 'truth'. A practice-led research approach in order to create new representations in art may apply a hybrid of methodologies, such as observational drawings, while also interpreting art historical methods relevant to the seventeenth century, and potentially combining contemporary scientific methods of forensic scrutiny. It is possible to consider such representations in archaeology and art act as contemporary *vanitas*, however without the overt moral imperative. Each discipline broadly offers differing methodologies and wider views of interpretation of the story but also of the very fabric of the lived lives. In archaeology, for example, the analysis of teeth may reveal an



individual's poor diet and imply their class. Through art it is possible to reconnect with methods of working and retrace processes available to artists of the period – such as layered thin glazes through representational imagery in oil painting and using a *camera obscura* – to help comprehend facets of the story. In many ways the lens of the seventeenth century is a metaphor for opening new realms of perception for science and art and collectively we trace this metaphor further into the twenty-first century, combining state-of-the-art techniques of art and science with human curiosity.

Through our forensic testing, image-making and field investigations, we have been sensitive to the lives of the victims themselves. We seek not to exploit these victims, rather our intention is to respectfully understand their lives and their story: to give voice to the voiceless. Additionally we are interested in how a consideration of Torrentius and his sole surviving work can be used to provide new understanding of the *Batavia* history, and locate our archaeological practices in a broader history of representation and visual interpretation.

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1. T. Weststeijn, *The visible world : Samuel van Hoogstraten's art theory and the legitimation of painting in the Dutch golden age*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2008.









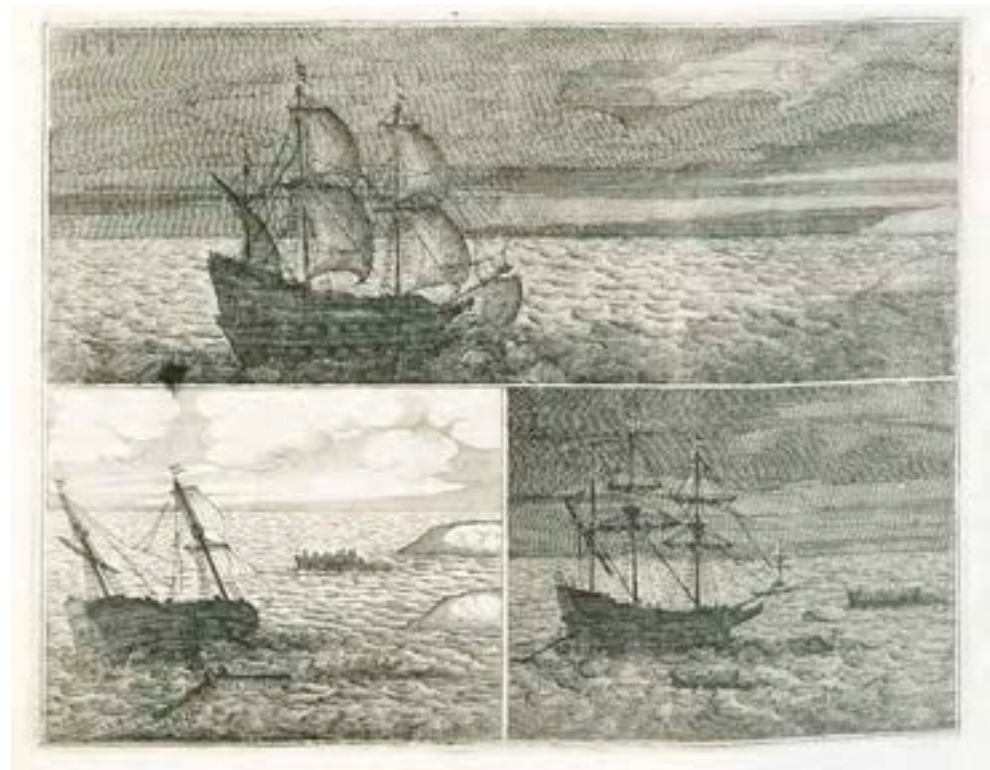


Figure 2: 'No 1', Francisco Pelsaert (c.1591–1630), *Ongeluckige Voyagie, van't schip Batavia, nae de Oost-Indien* (The unlucky voyage of the Batavia), Tot Amsterdam: Voor Jan Jansz, 1647. J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History, State Library of Western Australia.

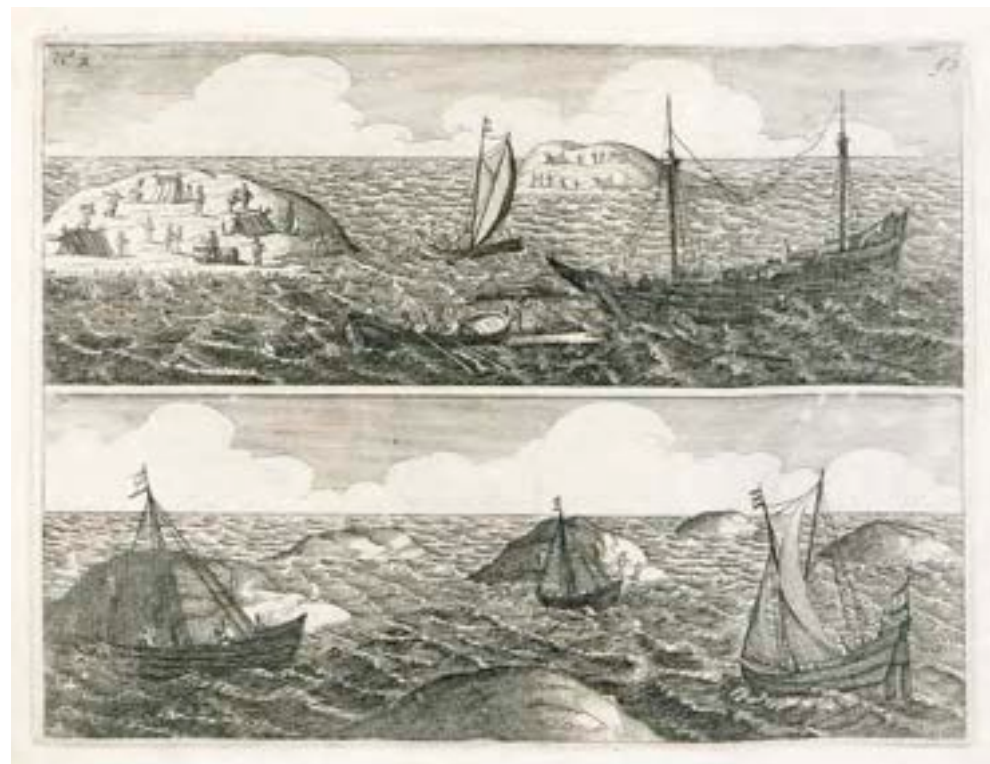


Figure 3: 'No 2', Francisco Pelsaert (c.1591–1630), *Ongeluckige Voyagie, van't schip Batavia, nae de Oost-Indien* (The unlucky voyage of the Batavia), Tot Amsterdam: Voor Jan Jansz, 1647. J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History, State Library of Western Australia.

## The booklet, 'The Unlucky Voyage of the Ship Batavia', 1647

Jane Lydon

The ship is a foundational site of imagination for the West, given the key role of seafaring in making the modern world, and stories of shipwreck continue to fascinate us. But for Europeans during the seventeenth century, the epic voyages of the Dutch East India Company seemed also the cutting edge of modernity – and so the disaster of shipwreck ruptured their sense of human mastery of the world. In this essay I explore how the event was represented during the mid-seventeenth century, and its contribution to the emergence of the disaster narrative as a popular literary genre. The illustrated book *Unlucky Voyage of the Ship Batavia* was published in Amsterdam in 1647, and included 15 copper engravings across 6 pages (Figure 1).

The illustrations are shaped by the period's unique visual culture, and the links between cartographers and artists. However this extremely popular work also used innovative techniques of montage and vignette to convey the narrative's drama, and affirm principles of morality and honour. The Dutch book trade expanded rapidly over the first half of the seventeenth century, alongside the VOC, becoming the centre of the European book trade. Around 1630 the disastrous, and the personal, travel account both appeared.<sup>1</sup> One prototype published between 1644–46 was the epic two-volume *Origin and Progress of the United Netherlands Chartered East-India Company* compiled by historian and editor Isaac Commelin and published by cartographer Jan Janssonius (born Jan Janszoon), one of the leading Amsterdam publishers specialising in navigational and cartographical material.<sup>2</sup> Janssonius is now most remembered (and collected) for his epic multi-volume atlases.<sup>3</sup> *Origin and Progress* is an enormous compendium of travel literature that contains more than 1600 pages of text. Commelin or Janssonius must have obtained this mass of semi-official material from a person closely connected with the VOC.<sup>4</sup>



Figure 1: (a) Marbled cover first edition. (b) Inside booklet. Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth.







Figure 4: 'No 3', Francisco Pelsaert (c.1591–1630), *Ongeluckige Voyagie, van't schip Batavia, nae de Oost-Indien* (The unlucky voyage of the Batavia), Tot Amsterdam: Voor Jan Jansz, 1647. J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History, State Library of Western Australia.

So capitalising upon this success, an illustrated pamphlet based on commandeur Pelsaert's journal, *Unlucky Voyage* was published the following year - in 1647, also edited by Commelin and published by Janssonius.<sup>5</sup> *Unlucky Voyage* also became very popular, as indicated by eight reprints and further pirated editions.<sup>6</sup> For contemporary readers, these accounts expressed a perennial human fascination with danger, but also a specifically Dutch history - Simon Schama explores the centrality of 'trials by water' to Dutch identity and culture, founded upon the 'primal Dutch experience: the struggle to survive rising waters.'<sup>7</sup> Recent scholarship has also attended to the way that shipwrecks reveal cultural uncertainties, and confront domestic audiences with the suffering required to secure their wealth.<sup>8</sup>

*Unlucky Voyage* is a complex multi-vocal text, comprising the narratives of a range of individuals, some elicited under torture.<sup>9</sup> However based on Pelsaert's journal, it most directly expresses the perspective of a long-term, senior, employee of the VOC reporting to his distant superiors, aiming to justify his devotion to Company interests. Although we gain many hints of insubordination and fragmentation of the social order, ultimately it is structured as a battle between God and the Devil, good and evil, represented by the discipline and piety of the VOC and its officers - against the heretical beliefs and evil deeds of Cornelisz, who 'by his innate corruptness had allowed himself to be led by the Devil'.<sup>10</sup>

Pelsaert's framing of events as a battle between godliness and heresy is made even more explicit in Commelin's pamphlet, which can also be seen as a moral fable: the title page of the first edition of *Unlucky Voyage*, for example, announced it as 'a caution to all who would sail to the Indies'. The engravings illustrating *Unlucky Voyage* give more pointed meaning to the text (Figures 2- 7). They occupy an interesting space between map and picture, exemplifying the 'mapping impulse' of seventeenth century Dutch art, featuring shared interests between paintings and maps.

The conventions of shipwreck in seventeenth century Dutch art were stylistically orderly and controlled, expressing an underlying faith in providence.<sup>11</sup> This sense of divine order emerges in the first illustration ('No 1') in which the face of God looks sombrely through the clouds. These first three scenes are reminiscent of the portolans or sailors' instructions used in nautical manuals, which influenced the visual representation of space over these decades (Figure 2). Of particular interest is the engraver's decision to create a sense of temporal movement through showing successive, precisely located moments in the story. This is an effective way of representing the temporality of shipwreck, which as Pelsaert's journals make so excruciatingly clear was actually a long-drawn-out period of hours and days, as the ship gradually settled and broke up amidst the survivors' desperate activity.

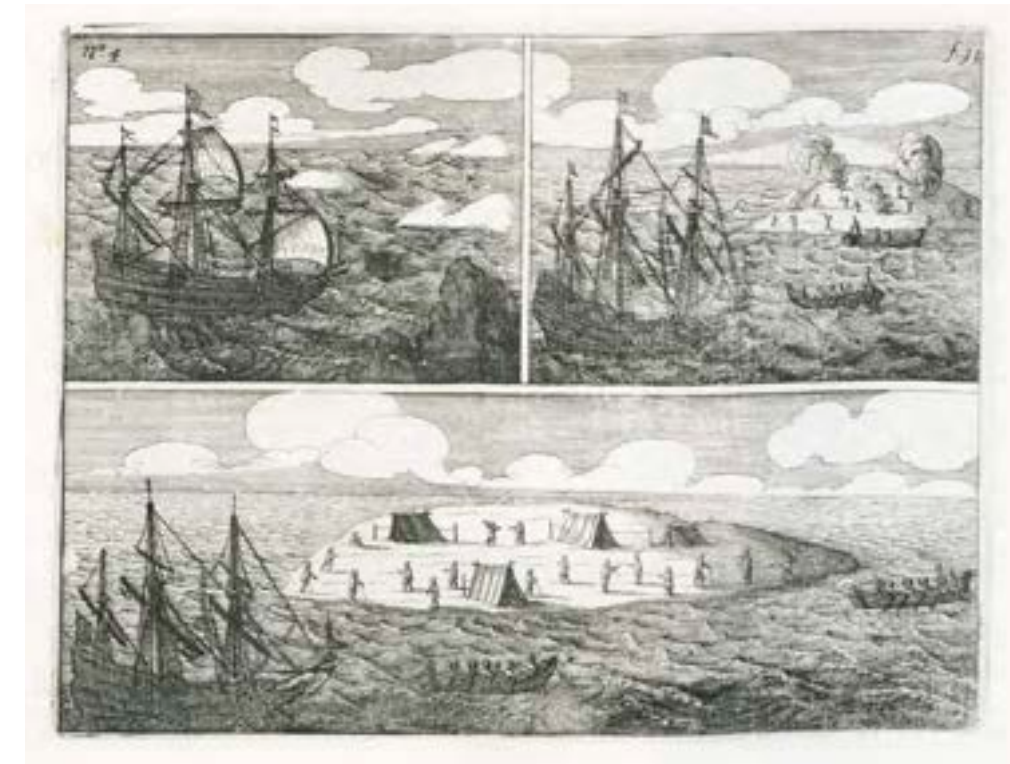


Figure 5: 'No 4', Francisco Pelsaert (c.1591–1630), *Ongeluckige Voyagie, van't schip Batavia, nae de Oost-Indien* (The unlucky voyage of the Batavia), Tot Amsterdam: Voor Jan Jansz, 1647. J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History, State Library of Western Australia.

Similarly, 'No 2' depicts another set of two scenes: at top, the wreck lies in the foreground, figures still visible on deck, while a rowing boat hovers near the bow (Figure 3).

Next ['No 3'] we see a single scene of massacre (Figure 4). The mutineers killed most of their victims in small numbers, over a longer period, and often clandestinely, but large-scale massacre was both most shocking, and visually more effective. The scene may represent the first massacre of at least fifteen people on Traitor's Island on 9 July or perhaps subsequent attacks on Seals Island on 15 and 18 July. An aerial vantage point provides us with a map-like depiction of massacre in progress.

Recent research explores how the seventeenth century gave rise to new conceptualisations of space that were simultaneously explored in maps, surveying manuals, landscape paintings, and other media. We see this in the work of French print-maker Jacques Callot, one of the most famous artists of his time - who collaborated with military cartographers in producing the overview landscape *The Siege of Breda*. Its diverse perspectival spaces, although not internally coherent, created a new long-distance effect. Similarly, Brussels painter Pieter Snayers' oil paintings of particular locations, such as Battle of Kircholm (1605, Château de Sassenage) pictured almost from a bird's-eye perspective also provide an antecedent of this kind of hybrid image, constituting both map and landscape. But although they strike us as being very 'map-like', unlike Janssonius' atlases,

the scenes of *Unlucky Voyage* are spatially non-specific: Even by 1647 the archipelago was not widely known. Although *Unlucky Voyage's* scenes are precisely located in temporal terms in relation to Pelsaert's narrative, this spatial indeterminacy underlines the survivors' social dislocation, marooned in a heterotopic space of disorder and otherness.

The visual narrative then returns to the filmic mode of the first two full-pages, continuing ('No 4') with the return of Pelsaert from Batavia shown sailing towards the Abrolhos islands on the *Sardam* (between 15 July–7 September) (Figure 5). Again, image 'No 5' comprises four scenes, showing successive moments from the dramatic finale in a rapid-fire filmic mode evoking the sequence of action as the mutineers are seized and the survivors liberated (Figure 6).

The final illustration shifts to depict the moral consequences of immorality, returning us to the ordered social space of investigation, confession and execution (Figure 7). It comprises two scenes, the first depicting the punishment by mutilation and hanging of the ringleaders. At bottom, possibly in a Batavian dungeon, torture is inflicted on four men. These are perhaps the most alien images to us, evoking a culture of spectacular violence that belongs to a different age. The legal system of the United Provinces of the Netherlands allowed for judicial torture and corporeal punishment, including the death penalty, and the States General of the Netherlands allowed the VOC to administer



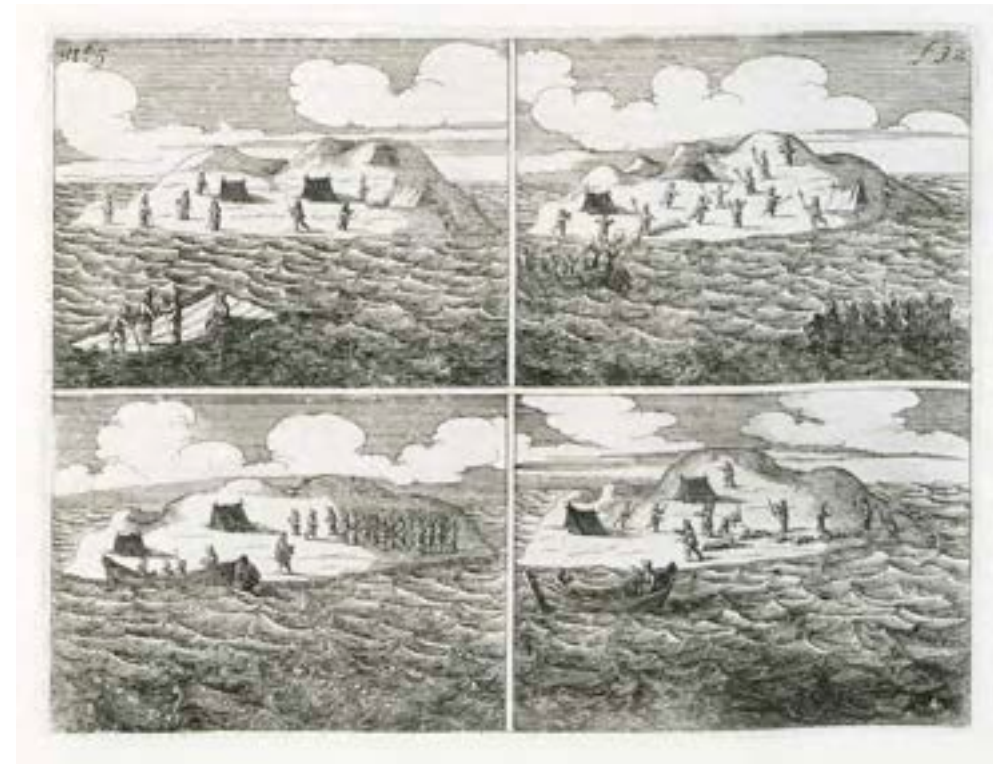


Figure 6: 'No 5', Francisco Pelsaert (c.1591–1630), *Ongeluckige Voyagie, van't schip Batavia, nae de Oost-Indien* (The unlucky voyage of the Batavia), Tot Amsterdam: Voor Jan Jansz, 1647. J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History, State Library of Western Australia.

such punishment in Batavia's courts. Until the late eighteenth century it was customary to publicly display the bodies of executed individuals. Through depicting such graphic violence, illustrators dishonoured the men, just as the actual public executions did by 'disseminating shame'. Again we again see the influence of Callot, whose experiences during the Thirty Years' War were the basis for his famous series of etchings known as *The miseries and misfortunes of war*, and marketed widely from the 1630s.

Finally, it is worth considering what is missing in this visual account, and how these blind spots shape its impact: What does the visual narrative add to, overlook, or emphasise? Notably absent is the covert nature of the mutiny, which challenged contemporary pictorial conventions, rendering much of the rebels' behaviour invisible and producing an emphasis in the engravings upon spectacular violence. Similarly, the theme of women's ill-treatment throughout the narrative – including the shocking ship-board attack on the respectable matron Lucretia Jansz prior to the wreck, and the sexual slavery of several survivors – is invisible in the engraved series. Women's voices are also absent from Pelsaert's journals, except as blameless victims of the criminals. There was no place for the respectable woman in the heterotopia of shipwreck and mutiny, and just as the illustrator dishonoured the criminals by depicting their final degradation, he chose not to humiliate the women further. In sum, the pamphlet successfully reached out to an expanding

popular audience, contributing to the new genre of disaster narratives. It domesticated the tale of an almost unimaginably distant tragedy, both reaffirming the might of the VOC yet also providing a frisson of strangeness, an intimation of the wildness that made their own Dutch world so safe.

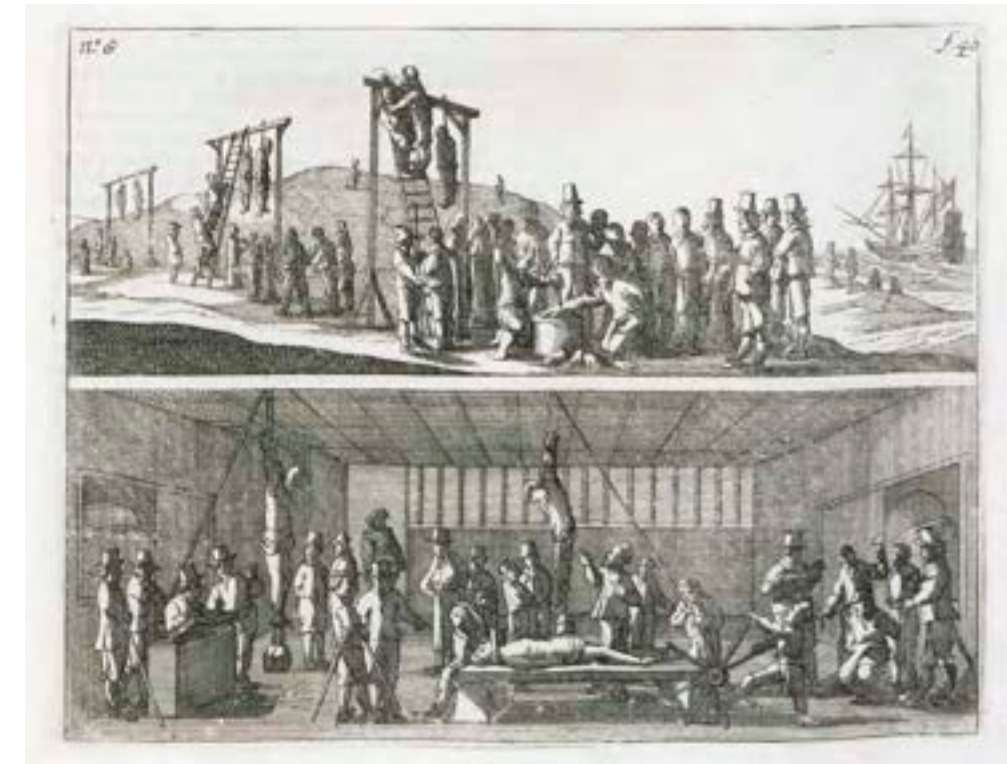


Figure 7: 'No 6', Francisco Pelsaert (c.1591–1630), *Ongeluckige Voyagie, van't schip Batavia, nae de Oost-Indien* (The unlucky voyage of the Batavia), Tot Amsterdam: Voor Jan Jansz, 1647. J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History, State Library of Western Australia.

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## Fragments of *Batavia's* daughters

Corioli Souter

*'Then after sailing from the Cape, it happened thus: There arose some trouble between the Skipper and the Commandeur and it was caused by two Women...'*

The Letter of Gijsbert Bastiaensz, Predikant written from Batavia, from here to his Brethren concerning his perilous journey, going to India [the Indies] in the year 1628.

*'If there were women here, the staple of the Indian trade would be yours'*

Jan Pieterszoon Coen, Governor General of Batavia to the Heren XII, Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) Company Directors.<sup>1</sup>

This cordon pulle or jug is reconstructed from sherds collected from the *Batavia* (1629) shipwreck inshore from the reef on which it foundered. Fragments of three oval medallions depict a woman with an anchor - the personification of hope. This ceramic installation has been created in recognition of Judith Gijsbertsz, daughter of the ship's predikant, and to demonstrate the fragmentary nature of the archive in relation to Dutch women both in Batavia, on the island of Java, and aboard the fated vessel of the same name.

### Judith and the women of Batavia

Women's voices are few and far between in seventeenth century archives, particularly in relation to VOC company business. Yet women were very much part of the establishment of a colony or 'factory' at Batavia, with organised emigration of women and orphan children. Those of marriageable age were considered employees of the VOC and despite not receiving a wage, they were bound to remain in the East Indies for five years. If they were already married they were required to stay for 15 years and for this commitment received extra clothing and rations.<sup>2</sup>

The Governor General of Batavia, Pieter Both organised the first emigration of families and 36 women in 1610. The women who may be considered as pioneers today are described in contemporary documents as being of ill repute.<sup>3</sup> Most of the women were sent to Ambon as wives to VOC soldiers and sailors and are not visible in an archival record, which favours the economic transactions rather than social aspects of the colony. They were probably also illiterate, leaving no personal records and as women, their exploits outside a domestic setting were rarely considered. It is in the words of Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen writing to the *Heren XIV*, the VOC Directors, that we have any record preserved:

*Everyone knows that the male sex cannot survive without women. And yet it seems that Your Excellencies have planted a colony without wishing to. To make up for this lack we have looked for funds and have had to buy many women at high prices. Just as you, Sirs, would only send us the scum of the land, so people here will sell us none but scum either... Should we expect to get good [citizens] from rejects, as you apparently expect... send us young girls, and we shall hope that things will go better than our experience with older women to date.*<sup>4</sup>

And so, they sent Judith.

Judith's father Gijsbert Bastiaensz had signed on with the VOC just weeks before to serve as the predikant, or preacher, for the voyage out and then in the East Indies. With him travelled his family, which included four sons and three daughters. Only he and Judith would make it to the East Indies alive.

In the archives relating to the *Batavia* mutiny, there is also an absence of female perspectives. Women were not asked to provide evidence at the trials of the mutineers, despite being





Craftswoman, 1648 – 1650, Geertruydt Roghman, RP-P-OB-4229. Courtesy Rijksmuseum



Woman Eating, Known as 'The Cat's Breakfast', c. 1661 - c. 1664, Gabriel Metsu SK-C-560. Courtesy Rijksmuseum



both eyewitnesses and victims - except for Judith. She reported hearing the mutineer Wouter Loos boast about slaying her eldest brother, Bastiaan.<sup>5</sup> After arriving in Batavia, her father wanted to return home with his only remaining daughter on the *retourschip* fleet in December 1630. Permission for this departure was granted on the condition that he made no claim on his earnings and that he would leave his daughter behind.<sup>7</sup> Although free from the bonds of mutiny, Judith was still a prisoner of the company in the East Indies. A shortage of marriageable women for the higher VOC Dutch servants in Asia would preclude her from being allowed to return to the Netherlands. Both father and daughter remained and Judith Gijsbertz was swiftly married to Pieter van der Hoeven. The marriage lasted less than three months with her husband dying in February 1631. After the customary mourning period of one year, Judith remarried the predikant Helmink Helmichsz and was stationed on Ambon. He died of dysentery in 1634.<sup>9</sup> The last known mention of Judith Gijsbertz is in 1635 when she was granted a predikant's widow pension of 300 guilders, and because of the injustices endured on the *Batavia* shipwreck, close to the South land, was awarded another 300 guilders and allowed to return home.<sup>9</sup>

#### Bearded men and hopeful women

When we consider the ceramic assemblages from the *Batavia* shipwreck, the *Baartmann* or Beardman salt-glazed, mottled-brown stoneware jug is the archetypal form. Typologies of these jugs are based on the stylistic differences of the 'masks',

particularly the execution of the mouth together with variations of the moustache.<sup>10</sup> Ranging from serene to grotesque, these are the faces of *Batavia* and together with beardmans from the wreck of the *Vergulde Draeck* (1656), are one of the most significant and accurately dated collections of these ceramics in the world.

Sifting through the vast collection of sherds from the *Batavia*, however, also reveals other motifs and designs. Some of the most eye-catching are fragments of salt-glazed wares slipped and banded with cobalt blue. These sherds are attributed to the Rhinish potteries including Westerwald and Siegburg.<sup>11</sup> During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Westerwald types were traded more widely than any other travelling as far as America, Africa and China.<sup>12</sup>

Details of the lives of seventeenth century women in the East Indies are as fragmented as the sherds of this stoneware vessel. Yet by using disparate pieces of information we can begin to reconstruct what an individual female experience may have been like. The figurative designs on these stoneware vessels compel us to also reflect on how women are rendered in the early modern period. Creative associations between archaeological assemblages, contemporary objects, imagery and archives allows us to consider these women as active participants in the story of *Batavia*.

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## Torrentius: Enigmatic painter of darkness

Paul Uhlmann



In the background of the *Batavia* story is a sole surviving work of remarkable art by Johannes van der Beeck, also known as Johannes Torrentius (1589-1644), *Emblematic Still Life painting with Flagon, Glass, Jug and Bridle* (1614). Given the qualities that the painting exhibits, it has been maintained that it was most likely produced with the aid of a *camera obscura*.<sup>1</sup> *Cameras obscura* of this period often employed a finely ground glass lens which was placed in an aperture of a black box and through the use of mirrors projected the image downwards onto a canvas or board for the artist to trace. At that time, the Netherlands was renowned throughout the Western world for hand grinding exacting lenses. The lenses were utilised by scientists and artists to discover new worlds – above through telescopes and below through microscopes. Scientists and artists moved within similar social circles, interacted with each other and shared knowledge. For example, poet and composer Constantijn Huygens (1596-1687), father of astronomer Christiaan Huygens (1629-1695), knew Torrentius. Huygens records how he was greatly suspicious of Torrentius's reaction to his public demonstration of the marvels of a *camera obscura* in his home. Clearly Torrentius was familiar with such devices, however, it was imperative for the artist, who conjured images of unearthly beauty through paint, that such methods remain a guild secret.<sup>2</sup>

It is disarming today to learn that such a simple image conveyed layered and contradictory symbolic messages. A mundane reality is depicted in the circular, still life painting; lined along a table's edge are a flagon, a wine glass, a stone water jar, two clay pipes and a piece of music with an inscription of a horse's bridle emerging from the enfolding darkness of the background. The painting is an allegory of moral instruction for temperance in life; wine can be diluted with water to show moderation while the horse's bridle warns its audience to restrain the natural passions. Additionally the text translated relates a warning to restrain the passions: 'That which exists beyond measure, will perish in evil

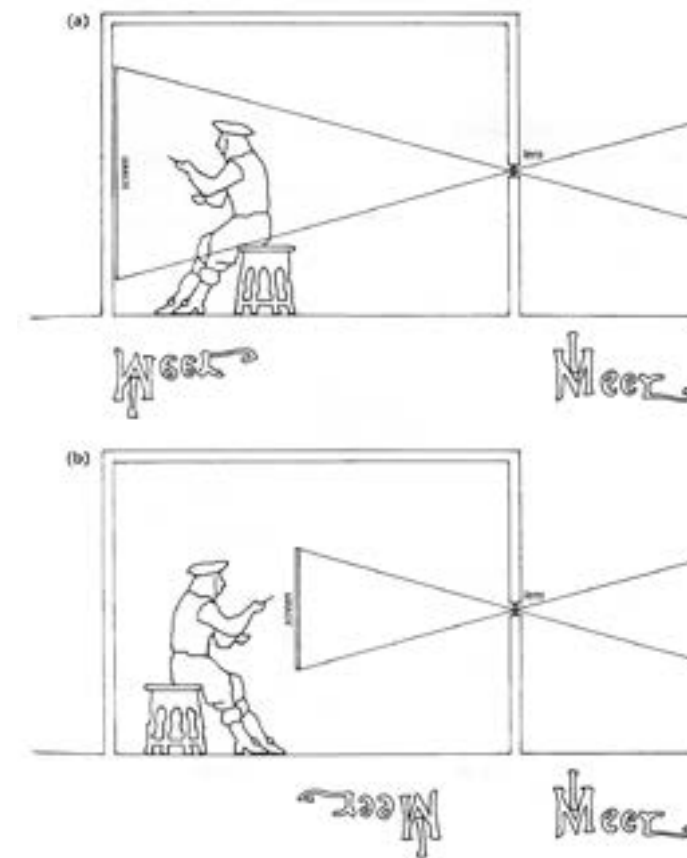
beyond measure'.<sup>3</sup> Given that this is the only known painting to exist by a painter who was repeatedly accused of being a heretic, a womaniser and a spendthrift, the irony is heavy. However, such a still-life painting emerges from a period of similar allegorical works produced as interactive parlor games known as *memento mori* or *vanitas*, where double meanings and contradictions form the architecture of the genre. Often a typical *memento mori*, which translates as 'remember you must die', includes a skull placed on books and interspersed with flowers and insects, reminding the viewer that life is transient and that knowledge too is fleeting and therefore time was not to be misspent. It seems Torrentius was a master of such imagery, provoking and prodding the viewer with further riddles and clues; if a viewer sat down to play the music within the work they would find that it produced a displeasing atonal rhythm: the music of the devil.<sup>4</sup>

In 1628 authorities no longer tolerated the excessive exuberances and heresy of Torrentius and he was suddenly thrown into a dudgeon in Haarlem, where he sustained months of torture before being brought before a jury to plead his case. It is thought that the art that he made which was 'almost of the origin of nature itself'<sup>5</sup> was the work of dark magic and this, as well as his unusual methods, contributed to his conviction. During his inquest interrogations he revealed that he did not paint like anyone else and did not use an easel or brushes.<sup>6</sup> The fumes issuing from his attic studio were renowned for their toxicity and were potentially explosive. Indeed, if the painter needed to go into his studio he needed to plug his ears and nose to escape from the noxious vapours.<sup>7</sup> A witness at the trial, Doctor Jacob Hogenheym, related that the artist would 'lay his panels on the floor' and then from 'his prepared paints there comes a sweet sound, right above the panel' similar to a 'swarm of sweet bees humming and singing'. Torrentius confirmed that the painting was finished when the buzz 'finally ends'.<sup>8</sup>





Figure 1: Infrared Reflectogram (IRR) of Torrentius still-life painting. 'With a special camera, fitted with a detector that operates in the near infrared range (800 - 1700 nm), it may be possible to detect underdrawings in carbon black. In the Torrentius we found rather faint lines under the paint layers. In order to make them more intelligible we traced these lines in red. We are not sure about the function of these lines. We assume that they may have been useful in correcting the distortion of the not-too-perfect seventeenth-century lenses.' Email from Arie Wallert to Paul Uhlmann dated Thursday 25 January 2018. Printed with kind permission of the Rijksmuseum.



Diagrams of room-type camera obscuras (a) with the image projected onto the far wall and (b) with the image projected onto a translucent screen, viewed from the back. The versions of Vermeer's monogram show the effect of each type of camera on the orientation of the image, as the viewer sees it. In (a) the image is upside-down and reversed left-to-right. In (b) the image is upside-down but not laterally reversed.

Figure 2: Illustrations of camera obscura, courtesy of Philip Steadman, *Vermeer's Camera*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001.

But the process of making the work largely remains a mystery. Indeed in the marvellous film of 2016 directed by Maarten de Kroon *Mysterious Masterpiece (Cold Case Torrentius)*, the conservator Arie Wallert describes how through extensive testing he was unable to decipher the binding medium - there were no traces of linseed oil or poppy seed oil for the medium. Uniquely, instead, he found traces of pectin or sugar.<sup>9</sup> However, an infrared reflectogram (IRR) examination (Figure 1) revealed curious pencil marks under the surface of the painting and Wallert reasons that these lines would have aided the artist to shift the painting panel around during the process of painting in order to counter the optical distortion of the projection of the lens of the camera obscura, as such devices could only focus the image in the centre of the projection.<sup>10</sup>

But how is it that Torrentius is linked to the *Batavia* story when he was not present on the voyage, when indeed at the time of the wreck he was rotting thousands of kilometers away in a Harleem dudgeon?

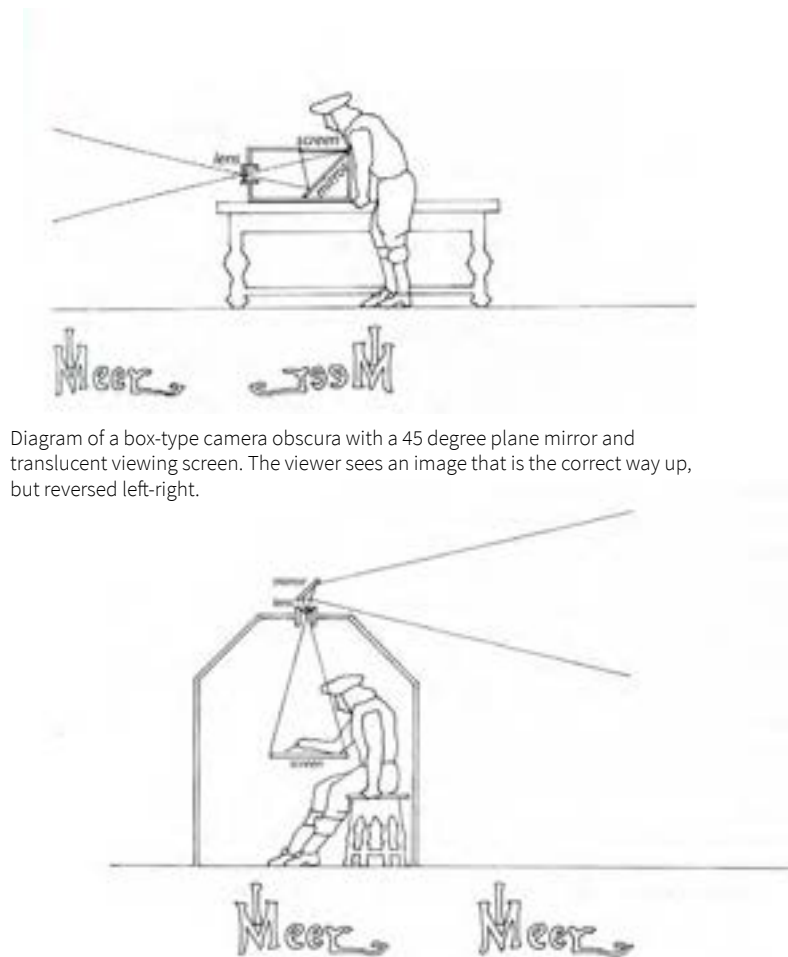


Diagram of a box-type camera obscura with a 45 degree plane mirror and translucent viewing screen. The viewer sees an image that is the correct way up, but reversed left-right.

Diagram of a tent-type camera obscura in which the screen is horizontal, the lens is in a vertical tube, and the scene is reflected onto the lens by a 45 degree mirror above the tube. If the artist faces away from the scene, as shown, then the image he sees is correctly oriented - neither upside-down nor reversed left to right.

Throughout the *Batavia* journals Francisco Pelsaert, the commander of the VOC ship, struggles to come terms with the debased transformation of his former under merchant, Jeronimus Cornelisz. For Cornelisz, the charismatic mutineer and primary cause of the flow of 'so much innocent blood' - who was an apothecary by profession well known to the stewardship of command - had 'denuded himself of all humanity' and become 'a tiger animal'.<sup>11</sup> Even through torture Cornelisz continued to astonish his captors, who discovered that he believed in neither heaven nor hell and that he possessed tremendous powers of persuasion to 'seduce' the minds of his fellow mutineers.





Figure 3: Reconstruction of *camera obscura*, test based on Torrentius painting. Courtesy of Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, Berlin.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 4: Reconstruction of *camera obscura* demonstrating distorted projected image, test based on Torrentius painting. Courtesy of Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, Berlin.<sup>16</sup>

It is this gap in comprehension that provokes Pelsaert to search for root ideological cause to these cold-blooded murders and to name him an 'Epicurean or Torrentian'.<sup>12</sup> At the time, to be an Epicurian was to lead a life where lust and pleasure were considered to be the highest good, while to be a Torrentian was to follow a darker, more opaque path of heresy and debauchery. Attempting to peer into the soul of this scoundrel, Pelsaert writes that the delusional mind of Cornelisz reasoned 'that all he had done was sent into his heart by God'. His strange beliefs maintained that he was doing God's will and that he was beyond rebuke – he therefore considered himself free of conscience or blame.<sup>13</sup>

Although there is no proof, it is reasoned by many scholars including Wim Cerutti<sup>14</sup> that as they both lived near each other and moved in elite circles in the small city of Haarlem, Cornelisz would have known Torrentius and been well aware of the power of his work. Certainly Torrentius's paintings had made their mark in civil society as witnessed by the comments of his contemporary, Constantijn Huygens. It is interesting to conjecture that this image by Torrentius could well be claimed as a work of some importance for the history of Australian art, as somewhere within the consciousness of Cornelisz images such as this drifted through his mind as he performed his psychotic episode on the small low lying islands off the uncharted coast of the unconscious continent of Australia.

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12. Footnotes 84 and 89 in *ibid.*
13. *ibid.* p. 69.
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16. *ibid.*







## Retracing Lives through Art, Science and the Imagination

Paul Uhlmann

To draw the symmetry of the human skull, to contemplate this form, is to connect to an essential structure of ontology, of being. One cannot transcribe the topology of an actual skull without considering what kind of life was lived. How did this person see the world? What was their appearance? What did they do? How did they die?

In 2015, over a period of many months, I drew the skulls of *Batavia* victims in the forensic laboratories at the University of Western Australia, and during periods of intense meditation it seemed as if I was communicating with the victims on a deeper level beyond rational consciousness. Spending time drawing such structures reveals life even though all signs of life have long since vanished; one considers the inside and the outside of the form, the holes falling backwards into the cranium for breathing, eating, seeing, communicating. The philosopher of the poetic image Gaston Bachelard might well consider such phenomenological holes as being a constellation of possibilities for contemplating the re-imagining of a life.<sup>1</sup>

In order to gain insights into the technology of Torrentius, I brought into the laboratory a simple portable *camera obscura* which had a lens on the front of the box and a frosted glass on the rear. By placing my head under the black velvet cloth affixed to the camera, I was confronted with an image similar to that of the Dutch master from 400 years ago; the image on the glass was upside down and aspects of the form in sharp focus, while the edges were distorted. The skull was beguiling as the shifting light meant that the form seemed to live in a new kind of voluminous clarity. The skull I chose to mainly focus on was the 'Geraldton skull' originally found in 1964 on Beacon Island. The surface appears waxy, as it has been handled a great deal since discovery; there are clear marks of brutal violence to the cranium with saber marks and indentations. A half-moon shaped absence craters the form and, remarkably, the remaining piece of this puzzle was discovered in the excavation of 2015.

### *night of my sickness*

On 4 June 1629, the *Batavia* VOC ship was off-course careering through darkness, sailing unawares close to the uncharted coastline of the Great Southern Land, when the captain mistook the light on the water for moonlight instead of the white foam of a concealed reef. The weight and speed of the vessel immediately impaled the ship on the sharp limestone coral. Pelseart, who was ill down below, was thrown from his bunk; he ran up to the deck and called out, 'Skipper what have you done, that through your reckless carelessness you have run this noose round our necks'.<sup>2</sup>

### *notebook to the void*

In November 2016 I was fortunate to be invited to an archaeological excavation on Beacon Island. Over the course of a few days I worked with the archaeological team and experienced the true nature of an archaeological dig where it seemed that the team of international scientists became part of their harsh surroundings in quite a literal way – dust covered bodies and had to be kept from mouths; flies were a continual nuisance; the sun and wind burnt exposed skin on faces, arms and legs; birds where everywhere – above and underfoot. I was surprised when I arrived to be guided over a series of wooden planks which crisscrossed the area. These planks prevented the edges of fresh excavation holes from collapsing but they also avoided the numerous bird nests, which were burrowed under the fragile honeycombed coral surface of the island. As progress was made, it was a regular occurrence to witness a chick being unearthed from its nest, which was always hurriedly taken to a new location. After my first day of hard work sifting sands it seemed to me that archaeology and art shared a good deal: drive and focus are not enough to gain results. However, on my second day the efforts of the team were rewarded as forensic anthropologists Daniel Franklin and Ambika Flavel revealed



the lower limbs on a victim. On my final day I witnessed the full unveiling of the body. Dan and Ambika worked very slowly brushing and sweeping sand away and cutting the occasional grass root system. It became clear as they toiled that a nest had been made just under the chest of the victim and that the birds had burrowed through the ribcage and pushed the lower jaw and cranium outwards, so that it was initially difficult to tell if the body was faced upwards or downwards. However, the arms were crossed, which suggested that the body was buried in the early stages of the wreck, perhaps a death by drowning or thirst.

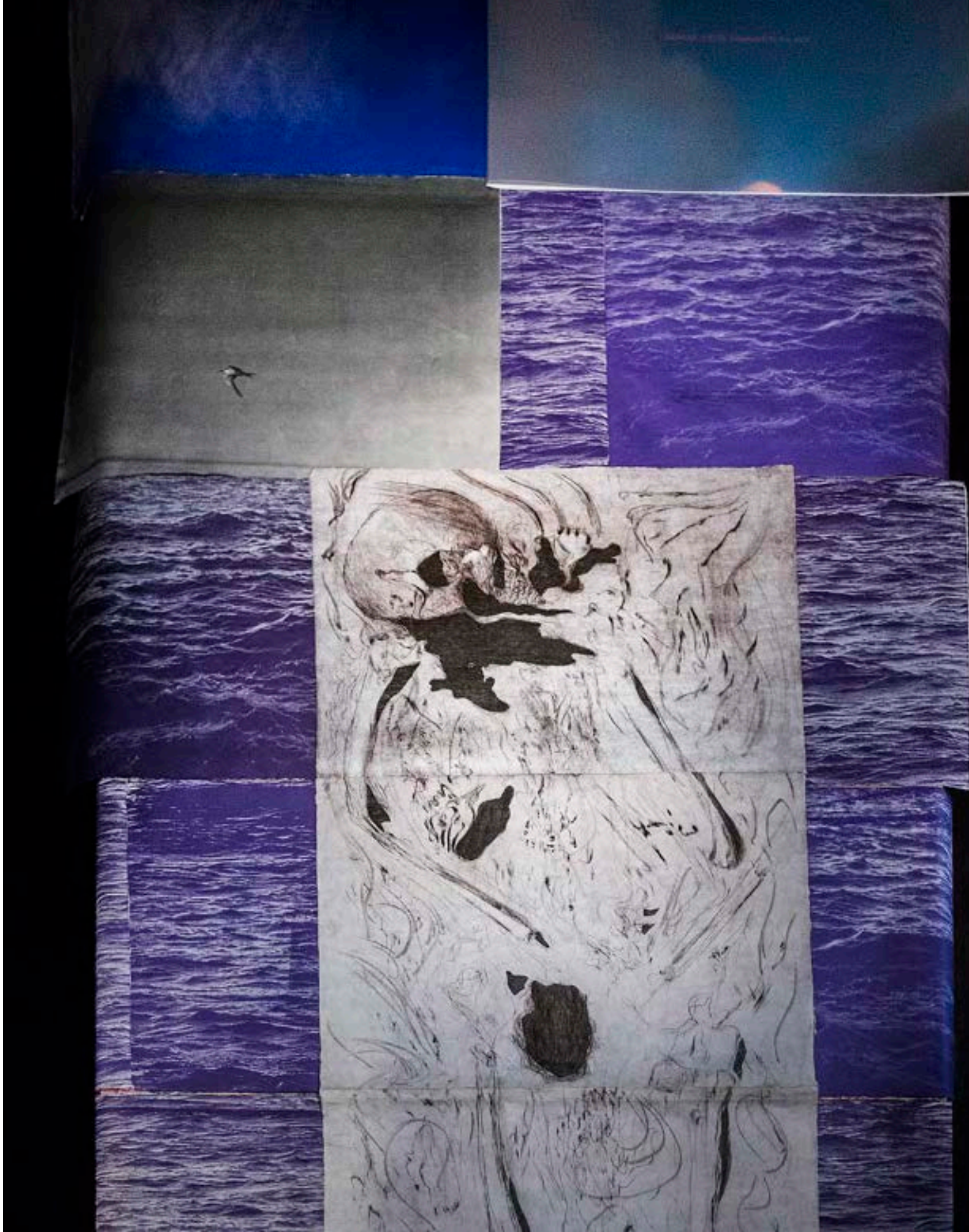
My intention with this work – a series of conceptual maps – was to reflect the inhospitable territory that was now inscribed into the remains of the victim and to also meditate on the moment of revealing. I wanted to emulate the great care that I witnessed on the part of the archaeologists, which was, no doubt, in complete contrast to the final days of the victim.

#### *the archaeology of birds*

This work consists of seven glass teeth from six different individuals made using a lost wax process, and each tooth is paired with a single piece of coral from Beacon Island. The work evolved slowly through conversations and eavesdropping on comments made by experts as they examined the skulls during my drawing sessions. Forensic examination of human teeth can reveal the history of a victim and even potentially narrow the field in terms of individual identification. Alistair Paterson related a story of how in 2015 they had been frustrated by their collective efforts to locate unmarked gravesites, even through they were using state-of-the-art ground penetrating radar (GPR) techniques, when they located a single human tooth on the surface of the sand revealed by the incessant activity of the birds. This tooth became the new focus for excavation and led to the discovery of a dual gravesite where one body had been

tenderly laid over another. Insights into the lives of these Dutch mariners and passengers can arise from the most unexpected collaborators.

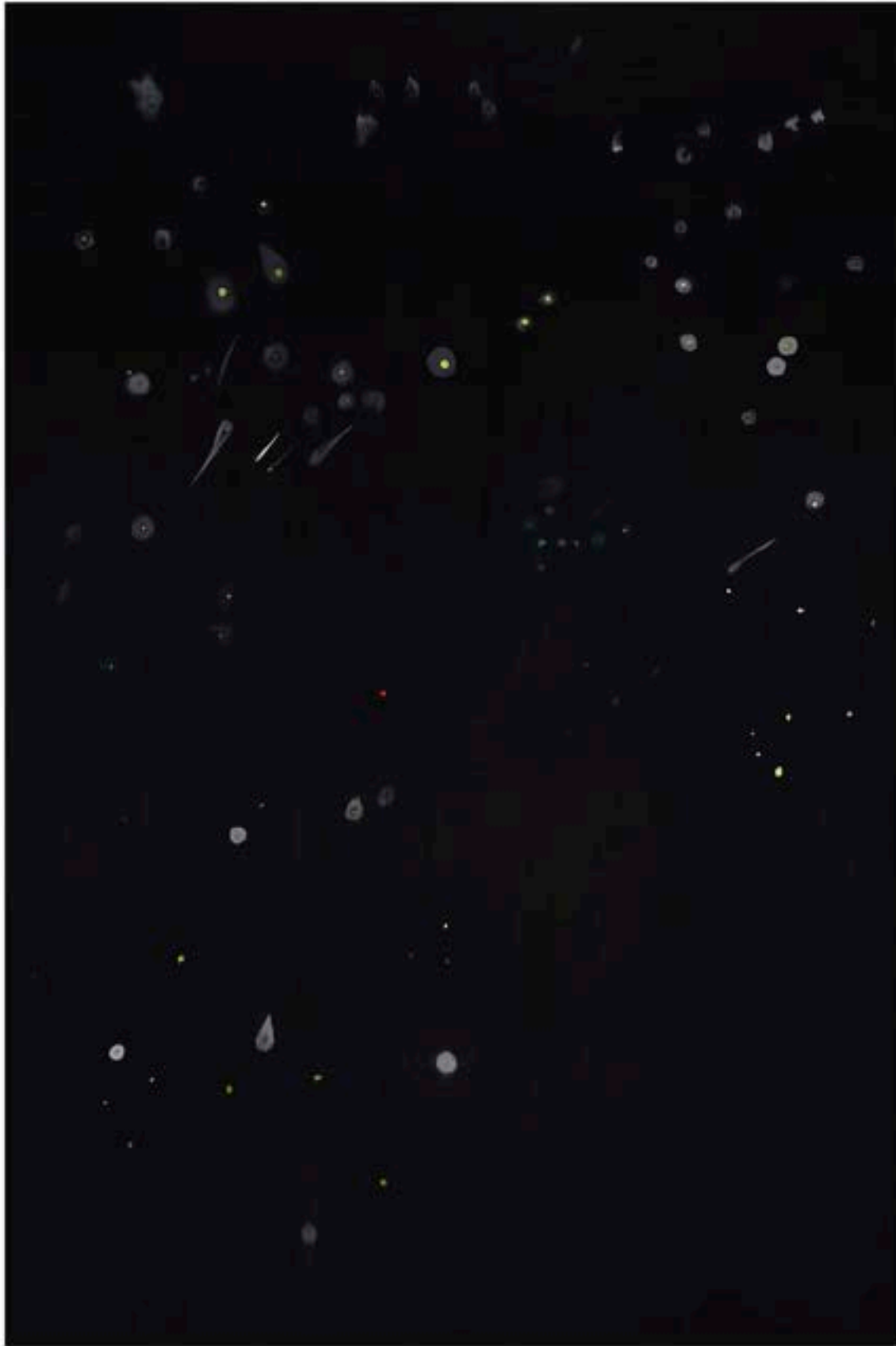
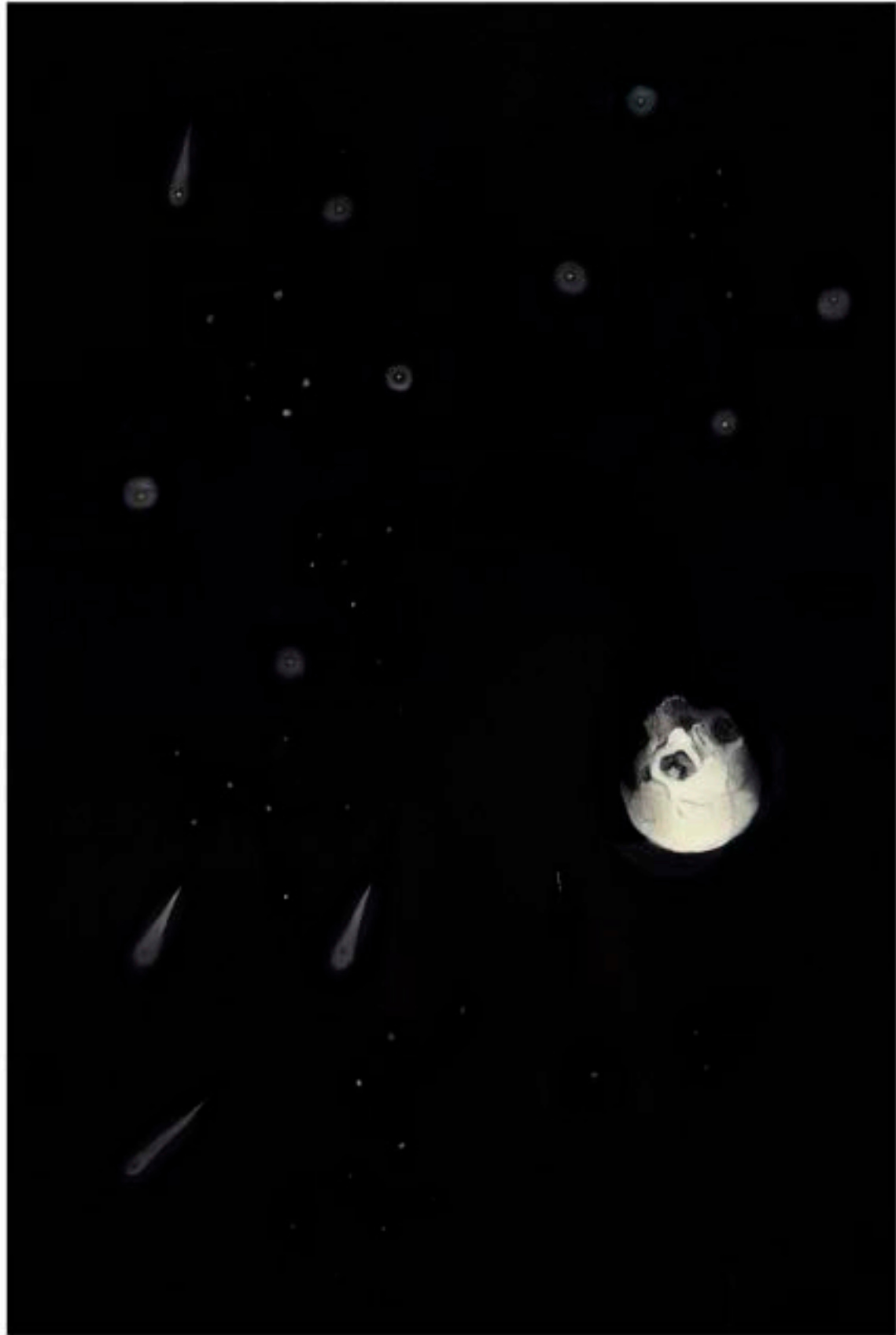
1. G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, (trans. Maria Jolas), Beacon Press, Boston, 1969.
2. F. Pelsaert, *The Batavia journal of Francisco Pelsaert*, ARA Document 1630: 1098 QQ II, fol. 232-316) (trans M. van Huystee), accessed 15 January 2018, <[http://museum.wa.gov.au/maritime-archaeology-db/sites/default/files/no\\_136\\_pelsaertjournal.pdf](http://museum.wa.gov.au/maritime-archaeology-db/sites/default/files/no_136_pelsaertjournal.pdf)>.



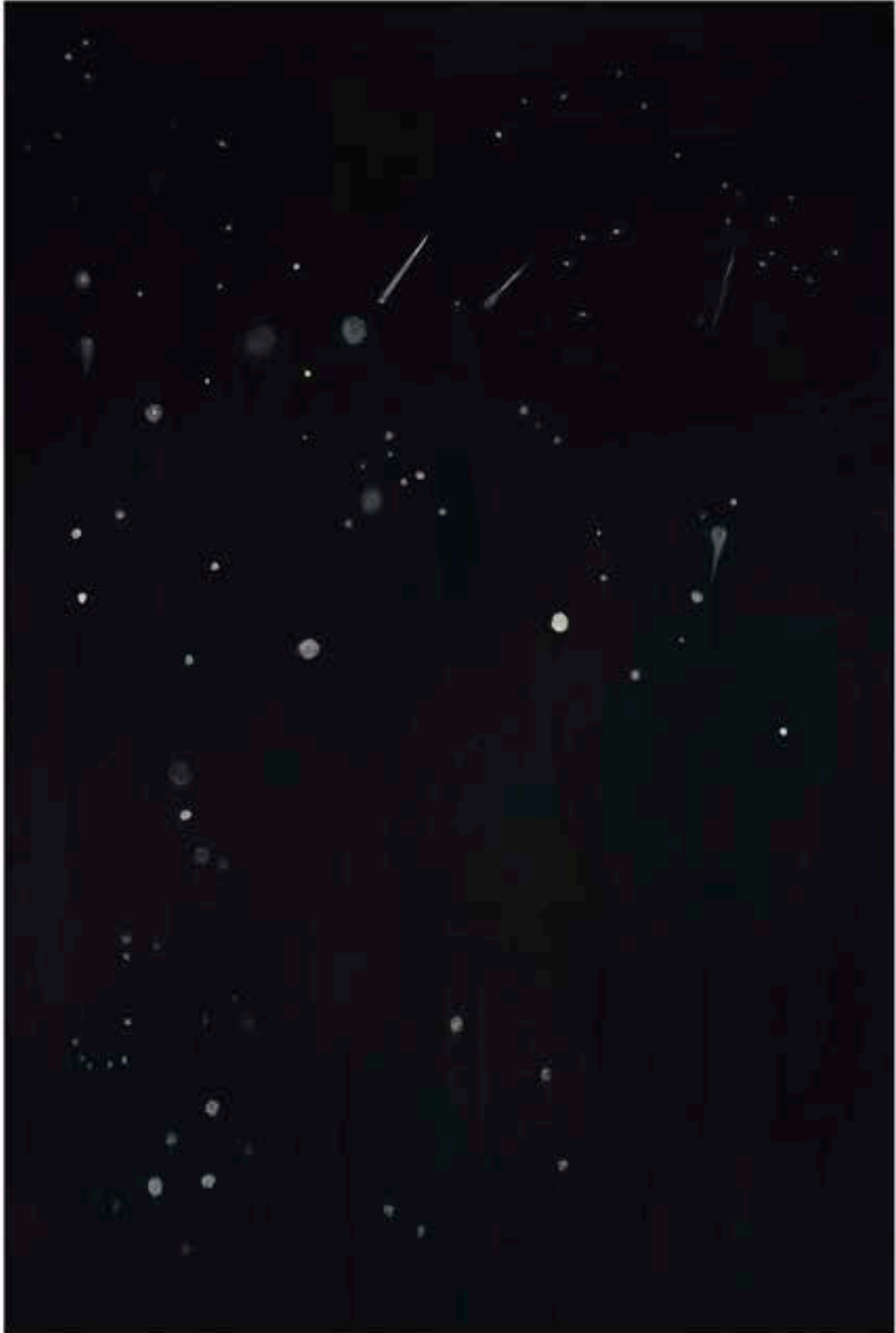
















## **Batavia as a film: Work of Robert Cleworth**

Ted Snell

He stands resolute; his bare head turned toward us. In his right hand a folded parchment, tightly secured. The white lace ruff around his neck is edged like a serrated blade, his black velvet jacket and breeches bedecked with a golden ribbon. He presents himself as a person of high status who has taken the opportunities available to an ambitious man in seventeenth century Holland to make his mark. However, we can see he is not in Holland; behind him an eroded coastline lances toward the horizon. So who is he and where is he?

Cast adrift on the Houtman Abrolhos off the coast of Western Australia, many thousands of miles from home, the man looking inquisitively at his audience in Robert Cleworth's painting *Storyboard, scenes for a movie - 'Captain-General, Jeronimo Cornelij'* (see image, left) is the apothecary Jeronimus Cornelisz. He is the man we know as the incarnation of evil, the leader of the mutineers following the wreck of the *Batavia* on the coast of New Holland in 1629, the man who ordered the murder of over 120 individuals under his protection.

We have no actual record of what Cornelisz looked like, despite knowing a great deal about his deeds, so when Cleworth decided to paint him he was caught on the horns of a dilemma, how to portray evil? Art books are filled with images of Dutchmen from the early seventeenth century to use as models, but should he just select one to stand in for this villain or does the evil in Cornelisz set him apart? By choosing any man from the 1620s, does it suggest that the evil in him is within us all and that it was only this extreme situation that enabled it to take full possession of Cornelisz's soul? Or does this random choice allude to the impossibility of knowing this man, trapped as we are in the intertwining narratives of so many others over many centuries? The fractured details Cleworth presents us with, in this and other paintings in *Batavia: Giving voice to the voiceless*, are the shards

of recollection from which we construct our own histories and from which ever more interpretations will inevitably follow.

When we look at this portrait, so beautifully crafted by Cleworth —summoned up from linseed oil and pigment, informed by his research into the *Batavia* — we soon realise that nothing is as it seems. The cleverly mimicked technique, the characters, the incongruent juxtapositions, everything is suspect. Cleworth is the master of conjecture, he orchestrates confusion, drawing us in with his seductive repertoire of bravura technique to leave us stranded, adrift, shipwrecked on the reef of uncertainty. If this is not a representation of the physical identity of Cornelisz then in what ways does it depict him and how does it allude to the nightmarish episode in our history?

The 'storyboard' clue in the title and the 'scenes from a movie' corollary suggests that any other person can play Cornelisz: it's a role that can be assumed, a character adopted to articulate a specific narrative, in this case, the events on Beacon Island following the shipwreck in 1629. History is a construct, Cleworth proposes in this body of work, because our understanding of what happened 400 years ago is only ever partial, a mix of contemporary record, concrete evidence, supposition, projection, and speculation.

The other 'portrait' of Cornelisz included in the exhibition, is even more disorienting. In response to the circumstances of his execution, as described by Francois Pelseart, when Cornelisz was '...taken to Seals Island, to a place made ready for it in order to exercise Justice, and there firstly to cut off both his hands, and after this shall be punished on the gallows with the cord till death shall follow'<sup>1</sup>, Cleworth presents a dismembered portrait. The violence of his death is echoed in the segmentation of his body into multiple small paintings hung at different heights across the wall. In one panel



Cornelisz's anguished profile, in another, his foot twisted in a violent contortion, his severed hands in another.

Cornelisz was a monster, '...besmirched in every way not only with abominable misdeeds but also with damnable heresy, declaring that there is neither devil nor hell'<sup>2</sup>, according to Pelseart, yet in his death, Cleworth inveigles our sympathy. Through the cruel experience of his execution and the anguish of his suffering, Cleworth encourages us to re-access, to question whether we see the evil deep in this man's soul or instead are we simply aware of human frailty and even our own vulnerability?

Over the past three decades of his artistic practice, Cleworth has rigorously examined what it means to be a man through paintings that interrogate the changing disposition and portrayal of masculinity. In particular, he has examined the role of sexual violence through the lens of feminist discourses on pornography, and through the polarisation inherent around issues of sexuality. In depicting the scenes of depravity and cruelty documented in Pelseart's journal his immediate thought was to use images of cage fighting, of actual, unmitigated violence. However, those images looked too tame when developed into paintings and he once again exploited the staged and simulated encounters inherent in pornography, because they were much more effective in depicting violence and aggression. These images also mirrored the activity described by Pelseart as perpetrated by Cornelisz and his henchmen on the few, unfortunate, women in the company.

It is the power of those images and of Cleworth's remarkable technical skill in manipulating and reproducing them that generates a conundrum of interpretation. In this and earlier bodies of work he has explored the power of art that is knowingly wrenched from its historical context and juxtaposed with contemporary images as a strategy to investigate what

it means to be human. His fascination for the Baroque and its cinematic sensibility and propensity for narrative remains an underlying catalyst for his picture making. The images he borrows from seventeenth century Holland, from photographs of the Australian landscape, and from pornography are seamlessly collaged together to create a mysteriously unified sense of unreality.

It is not surprising that the subject matter of the *Batavia* with its horrendous tales of violence and abuse perpetrated against those who sailed on that blighted maiden voyage would be a stimulus for Cleworth's new work. In tandem with his exploration of how we reconstruct history from a plethora of sources, he also brings to these works an additional layer of complexity and open-endedness about how we understand masculinity, violence and sexuality. Those readings are further compounded when we as viewers bring our own values, experiences, and understanding to bear. Seduced by his technical prowess and the lush surfaces of his paintings, yet simultaneously repulsed by the subject matter, we become participants in this process of reconstruction and reinterpretation. This tension feeds our sense of disquiet while prising open the doors of wonderment, intrigue and introspection.

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1. *The Batavia Journal Of François Pelseart* (ARA Document 1630: 1098 QQ II, fol. 232-316), edited and translated by Marit Van Huystee. Report – Department of Maritime Archaeology Western Australian Maritime Museum No. 136 1994, p. 21.

2. *ibid*, p22.

















Still from the film  
**Torrentius**

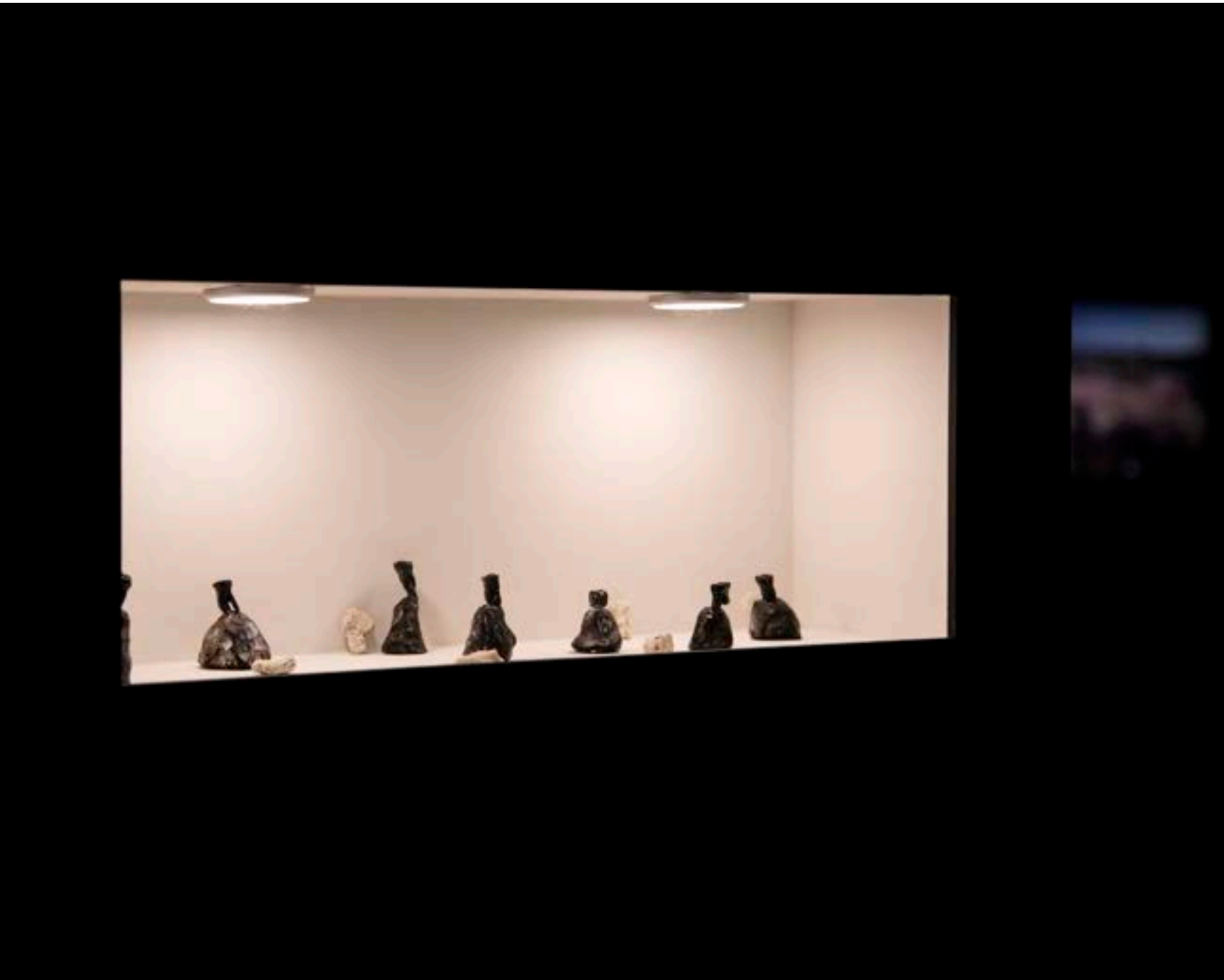
Jan Andriess & Maarten de Kroon







The exhibition installation  
*Batavia: Giving voice to the voiceless*  
Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery



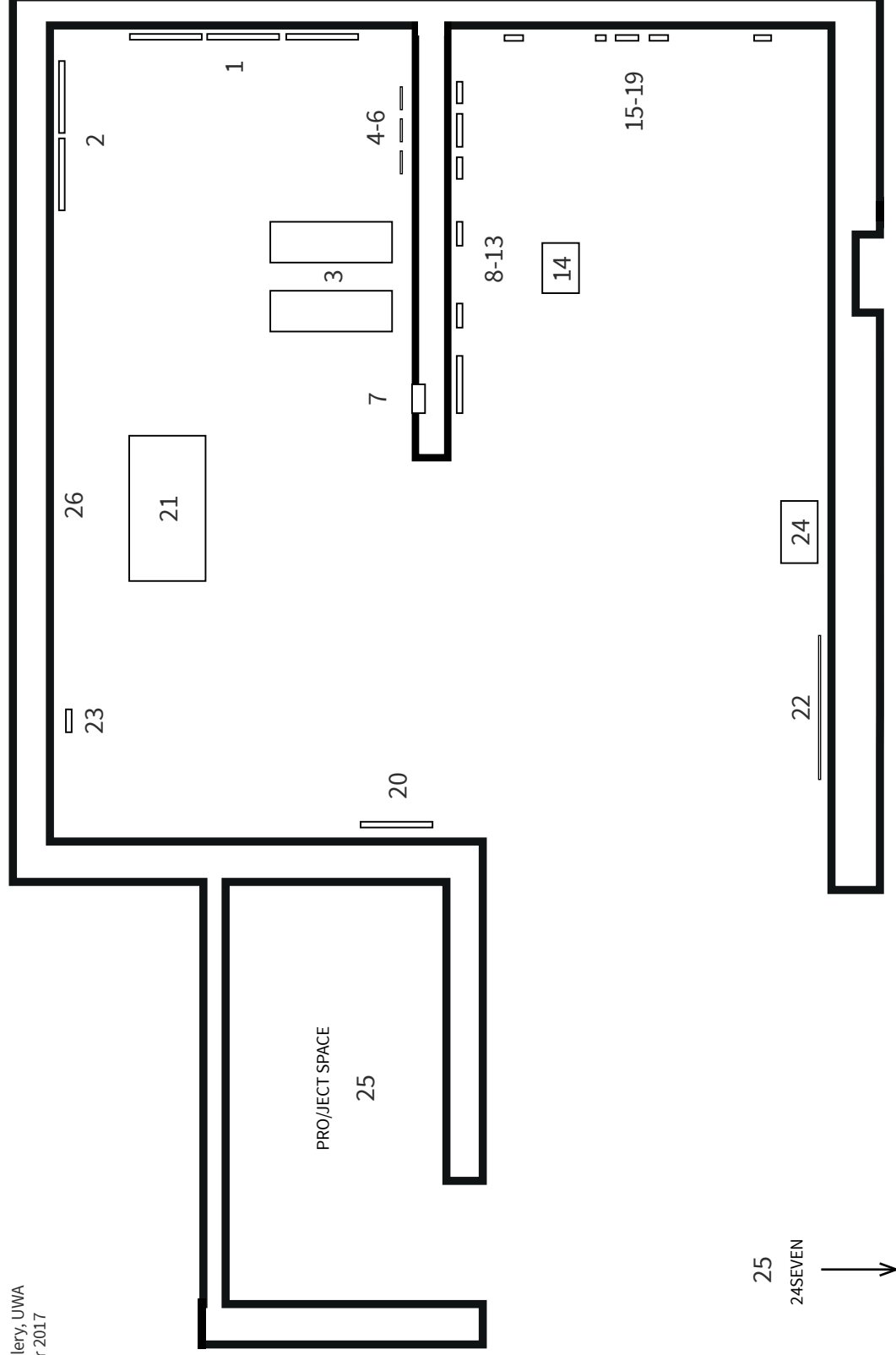




# BATAVIA: GIVING VOICE TO THE VOICELESS

## FLOOR MAP & LIST OF WORKS

Curated by Ted Snell  
Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, UWA  
7 October - 16 December 2017



## LIST OF WORKS

### PAUL UHLMANN

1. *Batavia 4th June 1629 (night of my sickness)*, 2017, oil on canvas, three panels each 180 x 120cm  
Courtesy the artist and Art Collective WA
2. *Batavia 4th June 1629 (night of my sickness II)*, 2017, oil on canvas, two panels each 180 x 120cm  
Courtesy the artist and Art Collective WA
3. *Batavia (1629) notebook to the void*, 2017, artist's book in seven sections; digital cover; silkscreens and dry-points on copper on Kozo paper, 49 x 70cm  
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4. *Batavia skull (camera obscura I)*, 2015, photo-print on aluminium, 15 x 12cm  
Courtesy the artist and Art Collective WA
5. *Batavia skull (camera obscura II)*, 2015, photo-print on aluminium, 15 x 12cm  
Courtesy the artist and Art Collective WA
6. *Batavia skull (camera obscura III)*, 2015, photo-print on aluminium, 15 x 12cm  
Courtesy the artist and Art Collective WA

### PAUL UHLMANN, ALISTAIR PATERSON & DANIEL FRANKLIN

7. *The archaeology of birds*, 2017  
7 black-glass teeth moulded from selected Batavia victims using lost wax process and 7 pieces of coral from Beacon Island, approx. 4 x 2.5cm (variable with each piece)  
A collaborative work courtesy of the artist, the archaeologist and the forensic scientist.

### ROB CLEWORTH

8. *Arm and Seascope*, 2017, oil on linen, 60 x 50cm  
Courtesy of the artist
9. *Wallabi skull – vanitas*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 18 x 18cm  
Courtesy of the artist
10. *Storyboard, scenes for a movie - Captain-General, Jeronimo Cornelij*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 29.5 x 21cm  
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11. *Storyboard, scenes for a movie - Jan Hendricisz and his concubine*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 37.5 x 29.8cm  
Courtesy of the artist
12. *Storyboard, scenes for a movie - Andries Jonas, Jan Hendricisz and Wouter Loos, 9 July*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 29 x 38cm  
Courtesy of the artist
13. *Storyboard, scenes for a movie - Jan Hendricisz, Matijs Beer and Jan Pelgrom*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 37.2 x 28.2cm  
Courtesy of the artist
14. *Vanitas*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 24 x 26.5cm  
Courtesy of the artist
15. *Cornelisz in Torrentius' studio*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 27cm diameter  
Courtesy of the artist
16. *Profile of Cornelisz*, 2017, oil on canvas, 21 x 17cm  
Courtesy of the artist
17. *Cornelisz' foot, on the day 2 October 1629*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 28.2 x 36cm  
Courtesy of the artist

### CORIOUJ SOUTER

18. *Jan Pelgrom's hand - he begged 'that he should be allowed to kill someone, because he should rather do that than eat or drink'*, 2017, oil on canvas, 37 x 29.5cm  
Courtesy of the artist
19. *Hayes Island*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 28.2 x 21cm  
Courtesy of the artist

### PAUL BOURKE

20. *Beacon Island flyover of the digital model pre building demolition*, 2017, 2 minutes (looped) video, full HD resolution, ambient audio track. Suitable for projector or large scale digital panel.  
Courtesy of the artist and "Shipwrecks of the Roaring Forties: A Maritime Archaeological Reassessment of some of Australia's Earliest Shipwrecks" ARC Linkage Project LP130100137 (Lead Investigator A. Paterson)

21. *Photographic 3D reconstruction of two Batavia victims in a shared grave*, 2017, 30 seconds (looping track) video, full HD resolution, no audio track.  
Projection installation onto sand.  
Courtesy of the artist and "Shipwrecks of the Roaring Forties: A Maritime Archaeological Reassessment of some of Australia's Earliest Shipwrecks" ARC Linkage Project LP130100137 (Lead Investigator A. Paterson)

### JEREMY GREEN

22. *Panorama of the excavation site on Beacon Island*, 2016, digital panorama take on iPhone  
Courtesy of Jeremy Green
23. *Drone video, excavation on Beacon Island*, 2016, digital video  
Courtesy of Jeremy Green

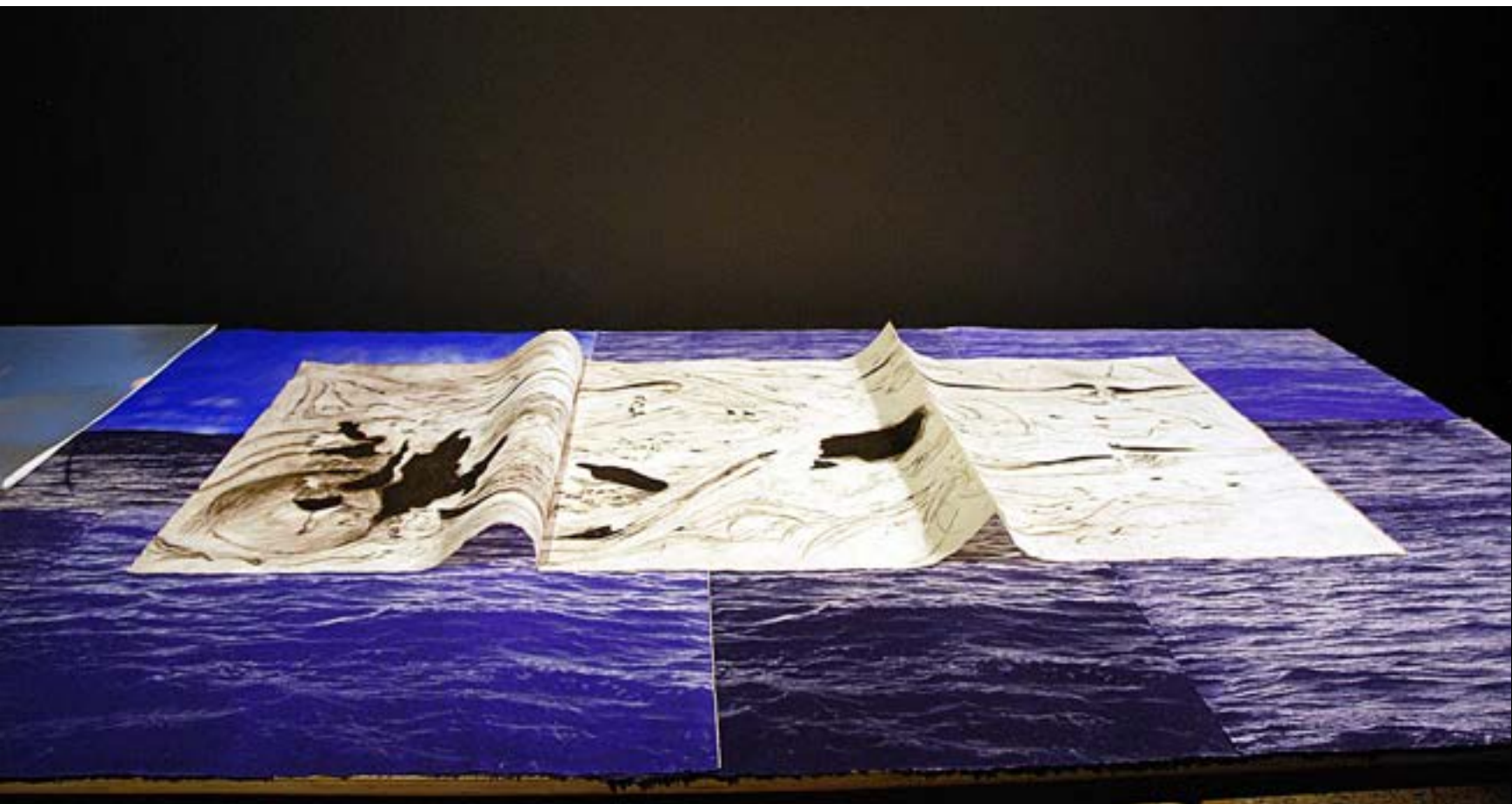
### JAN ANDRESSE & MAARTEN DE KROON

25. *TORRENTIUS*, 2013, DVD, 10:30 minutes loop  
Produced: Get Organized Film & Docs  
Music: variation on Yves Klein, Symphonie Monotone Silence (1949/1960), produced and performed by the Quamper Orchestra.  
Camera: Sander Sinoep  
Grip: André Plug  
Light: Erno Das  
Focuspuller: Flip Bleekrode  
Visual Effect & Grading: Ruud Kouwenberg / Martin Klein  
Sound Mix: Ronald & Jeroen Nadoorp, Bob Kommer  
Sound Studio's  
Production: Get Organized Film & Docs  
Special thanks to: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Zbigniew Herbert  
© Stichting Art Doc, Amsterdam 2013

One version will be displayed on 24SEVEN, a second version will be shown in the PRO/ject Space.

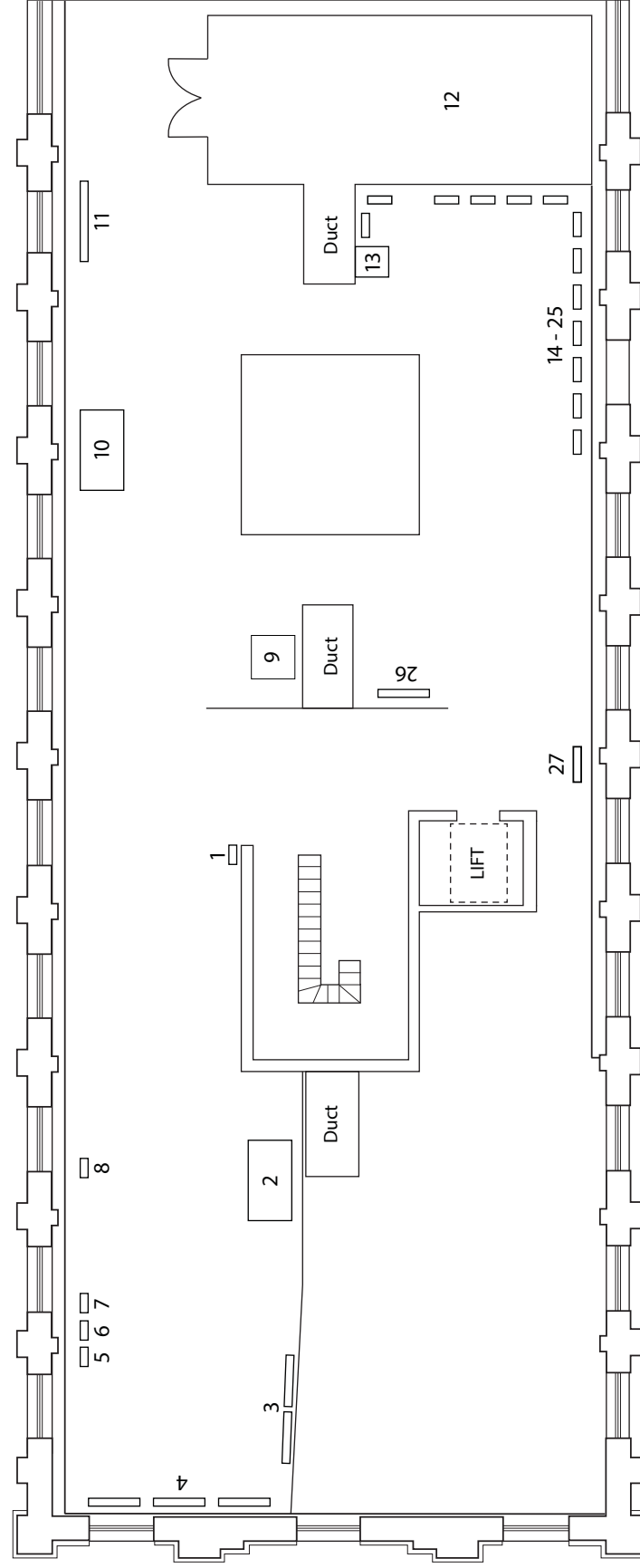
26. Reproduction of Johannes van der Beeck (Torrentius), Emblematic still life with flagon, glass, jug and bridle, 52 x 30.2cm

The exhibition installation  
*Batavia: Giving voice to the voiceless*  
Geraldton Regional Art Gallery









# GRAG

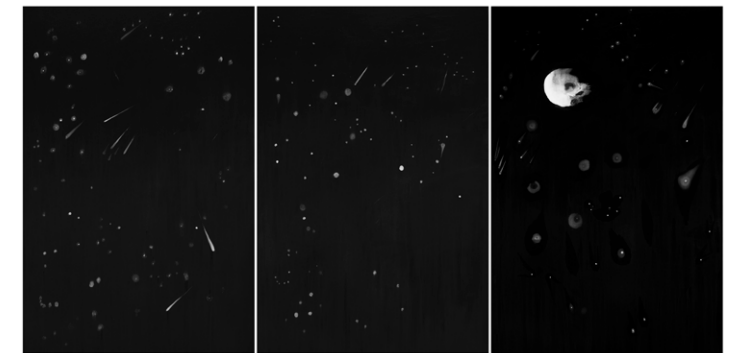
GERALDTON REGIONAL ART GALLERY

1. **Johannes van der Beeck.** *Enbiemaic still life with flagon, glass, jug and bottle*, 2017, digital print. 52 x 50.2 cm.
2. **Paul Uhlmann.** *Batavia (1629) notebook to the void*, 2017, artist's book in seven sections; digital cover; silkscreens and dry-points on copper on Kozo paper. 49 x 70cm. Courtesy of the artist and Art Collective WA
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4. **Paul Uhlmann.** *Batavia 4th June 1629 (night of my sickness)*, 2017, oil on canvas. three panels each 180 x 120cm. Courtesy of the artist and Art Collective WA
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6. **Paul Uhlmann.** *Batavia skull (camera obscura II)*, 2015, photo-print on aluminium. 20 x 16.5cm. Courtesy of the artist and Art Collective WA
7. **Paul Uhlmann.** *Batavia skull (camera obscura III)*, 2015, photo-print on aluminium. 20 x 13.5cm. Courtesy of the artist and Art Collective WA
8. **Paul Uhlmann, Alistair Paterson & Daniel Franklin.** *The archaeology of birds*, 2017, 7 black-glass teeth moulded from selected Batavia victims using lost wax process and 7 pieces of coral from Beacon Island. approx. 4 x 2.5cm (variable with each piece). A collaborative work courtesy of the artist, the archaeologist and the forensic scientist
9. **Corioli Souter.** *Fragments of Batavia's daughters*, 2017, artefact installation and digital narrative app. Courtesy of Corioli Souter, Curator, Department of Maritime Archaeology, WA Museum
10. **Paul Bourke.** *Photographic 3D reconstruction of two Batavia victims in a shared grave*, 2017, 30 seconds (looping track) video, full HD resolution, no audio track. Projection installation onto sand. Courtesy of the artist and "Shipwrecks of the Roaring Forties: A Maritime Archaeological Reassessment of some of Australia's Earliest Shipwrecks" ARC Linkage Project LP130100137 (Lead Investigator A. Paterson)
11. **Jeremy Green.** *Drone video, excavation on Beacon Island*, 2016, digital video. Courtesy of Jeremy Green
12. **Jan Andriess & Maarten De Kroon.** *TORRENTIUS*, 2013, DVD 10'30 minutes loop. Produced: Get Organized Film & Docs. Music: variation on Yves Klein, Symphonie Monotone Silence (1949/1960), produced and performed by the Quumber Orchestra. © Stichting Art Doc, Amsterdam 2013
13. **Rob Cleworth.** *Vanitas*, 2017, oil on wood panel. 24 x 26.5cm. Courtesy of the artist
14. **Rob Cleworth.** *Storyboard, scenes for a movie - 'Captain General Cornelij'*, 2017, oil on wood panel. 21 x 30cm. Courtesy of the artist
15. **Rob Cleworth.** *Hayes Island*, 2017, oil on wood panel. 28.2 x 21cm. Courtesy of the artist
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27. **Jeremy Green.** *Panorama of the excavation site on Beacon Island*, 2016, digital panorama take on iPhone. Courtesy of Jeremy Green

## Artwork Details



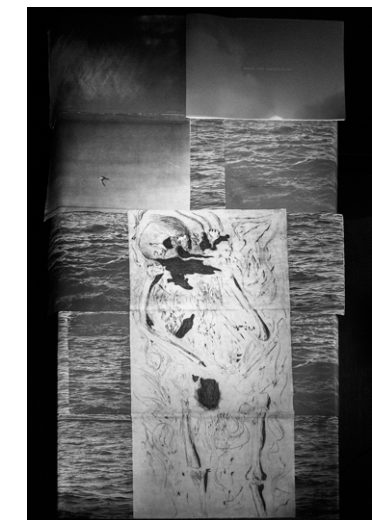
PAUL UHLMANN



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15 x 10cm.  
Courtesy the artist and Art Collective WA.



*Batavia skull (camera obscura III)*, 2015, photo-print on aluminium,  
15 x 13cm.  
Courtesy the artist and Art Collective WA.



PAUL UHLMANN, ALISTAIR PATERSON & DANIEL FRANKLIN

*the archaeology of birds*, 2017, 7 black-glass teeth moulded from  
selected *Batavia* victims using lost wax process and 7 pieces of coral  
from Beacon Island, approx. 4 x 2.5cm (variable with each piece).  
A collaborative work courtesy of the artist, the archaeologist and the  
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ROBERT CLEWORTH



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Courtesy of the artist.



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*Storyboard, scenes for a movie - Jan Hendricxsz, Mattys Beer and Jan Pelgrom*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 37.2 x 28.2cm.  
Courtesy of the artist.



*Storyboard, scenes for a movie - 'Andries Jonas, Jan Hendricxsz and Wouter Loos, 9 July'*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 29 x 38cm.  
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*Vanitas*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 24 x 26.5cm.  
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*Profile of Cornelisz*, 2017, oil on canvas, 21 x 17cm.  
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*Hayes Island*, 2017, oil on wood panel, 28.2 x 21cm.  
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*Beacon Island flyover of the digital model pre building demolition, 2017, 2 minutes (looping video) video, full HD resolution, ambient audio track. Suitable for projector or large scale digital panel. Courtesy of the artist and Shipwrecks of the Roaring Forties: A Maritime Archaeological Reassessment of some of Australia's Earliest Shipwrecks ARC Linkage Project LP130100137 (Lead Investigator A. Paterson).*



*Photographic 3D reconstruction of two Batavia victims in a shared grave, 2017, 30 seconds (looping track) video, full HD resolution, no audio track. Projection installation onto sand. Courtesy of the artist and Shipwrecks of the Roaring Forties: A Maritime Archaeological Reassessment of some of Australia's Earliest Shipwrecks ARC Linkage Project LP130100137 (Lead Investigator A. Paterson).*



JEREMY GREEN

*Panorama of the excavation site on Beacon island, 2016, digital panorama take on iPhone. Courtesy of Jeremy Green.*



*Drone video, excavation on Beacon Island, 2016, digital video. Courtesy of Jeremy Green.*



CORIOLI SOUTER

*Fragments of Batavia's daughters, 2017, ceramic installation and LWAG+ App narrative. Courtesy of Corioli Souter, Curator, Department of Maritime Archaeology, WA Museum.*



## JAN ANDRIESSE & MAARTEN DE KROON

*TORRENTIUS*, 2013, DVD

10'30 minutes loop.

Produced: Get Organized Film & Docs

Painting: *Still Life with a Bridle*, dated 1614, by Johannes

Torrentius (1588-1644), Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

Music: variation on Yves Klein, *Symphonie Monotone Silence* (1949), produced and performed by the Qcumber Orchestra.

Camera: Sander Snoep

Grip: André Plug

Light: Erno Das

Focuspuller: Flip Bleekrode

Visual Effect & Grading: Ruud Kouwenberg / Martin Klein

Sound Mix: Ronald & Jeroen Nadorp, Bob Kommer Sound Studio's

Production: Get Organized Film & Docs

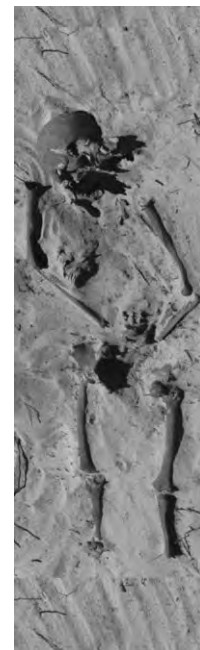
Special thanks to: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Zbigniew Herbert

© Stichting Art Doc, Amsterdam, 2013.



Additional artwork not included in the *Batavia: giving voice to the voiceless* exhibitions.

## PAUL UHLMANN



*page from the void (SK 18: Beacon Island 19th – 20th November 2016)*, 2018, two monotone prints printed on recto and verso folded sheet, offset print, edition 400, 22 x 77cm.

## Author Biographies

**Professor Jane Lydon** is the Wesfarmers Chair of Australian History at the University of Western Australia. Her research centres upon Australia's colonial past and its legacies in the present. Her books include *The Flash of Recognition: Photography and the emergence of Indigenous rights* (NewSouth, 2012), which won the 2013 Queensland Literary Awards' History Book Award, and (ed.) *Calling the Shots: Aboriginal Photographies* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2014) which brings together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars to explore the Indigenous meanings of the photographic archive. *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire* was published by Bloomsbury in 2016.

**Professor Alistair Paterson** is an ARC Future Fellow in archaeology at the University of Western Australia. His research examines the historical archaeology of colonial coastal contact and settlement in Australia's North-west and the Indian Ocean. His key interests are Western Australia and Indian Ocean history, Aboriginal Australia, Dutch East India Company, colonialism and exploration, rock art, and the history of collecting in Western Australia in collaboration with the Western Australian Museum, State Library of Western Australia, Art Gallery of Western Australia, and the British Museum.

**Corioli Souter** is a curator at the Department of Maritime Archaeology at the Western Australian Museum and adjunct lecturer at The University of Western Australia. Her current research interests are archaeology of the Indian Ocean and the history of collecting in Western Australia. She has collaborated with UWA archaeologists on the investigation of shipwreck survivor camps and other maritime terrestrial sites. Over the last few years, Corioli has developed exhibition projects for the Western Australian Museum including *Immerse: Exploring the Deep* (2011), *Lustre: Pearl and Australia* (2015) and *Travellers and Traders in the Indian Ocean World* (2016), a collaboration with the British Museum. Corioli is currently a Phd candidate at Deakin University and Partner Investigator on an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project *Collecting the West: How collections create Western Australia*.

**Professor Ted Snell, AM CitWA**, is Chief Cultural Officer at the University of Western Australia. Over the past two decades he has contributed to the national arts agenda through many board and committee roles, including Chair of the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council, Chair of Artbank and Chair of University Art Museums Australia. He is currently on the board of the UQ Art Museum. He has published several books and has curated numerous exhibitions, and is a regular commentator on the arts for ABC radio and television. He is currently Perth art reviewer for *The Australian* and writes regularly for *The Conversation*.

**Dr Paul Uhlmann** is coordinator of Visual Arts in the School of Arts and Humanities, Edith Cowan University in Perth and is a practicing artist who works in painting, printmaking and artists' books. He is interested in philosophies of impermanence. He studied art in Australia, was the recipient of a DAAD scholarship to study in Germany (1986-87), an Australia Council studio residency grant to study frescos in Italy (1994), and an International Samstag Scholarship to study in the Netherlands (1994-95). His PhD was conferred at RMIT in 2012. He has exhibited nationally and internationally since 1983 and his work is held in many collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of Western Australia and National Gallery of Victoria. His work is represented by Art Collective WA.



## Acknowledgments

Ted Snell, Paul Uhlmann and Alistair Paterson would like to thank all the artists who contributed to the exhibition: Robert Cleworth, Corioli Souter, Paul Bourke, Daniel Franklin, Jeremy Green, Jan Andriess and Maarten de Kroon. We are extremely grateful to them all for their enthusiasm, hard work and commitment.

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Design - Clare McFarlane

## Image credits

Cover image: Paul Uhlmann, *Batavia 4th June 1629 (night of my sickness) II* (detail), 2017, oil on canvas, two panels each 180 x 120cm.

Inside cover: Paul Uhlmann, *Batavia (1629) notebook to the void*, (detail), 2017, artist's book in seven sections; digital cover; silkscreens and dry-points on copper on kozo paper, 49 x 70cm.

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