Haddon, N, “The Promise of a Future: How visual artists present future scenarios especially with respect to a Tasmanian idyll.””, *Unnatural Futures*, 3-4 July 2014, Hobart, Tasmania (2014) [Non Refereed Conference Paper]

This paper will give an account of my research led visual art practice that explores the following theme: the promise of a future (past and future migrations).

The theme examines my own migratory encounter with the Tasmanian landscape and how this might be pictured in visual art. It draws on diverse topics: HG Wells ‘War of the Worlds’, the paintings of John Glover, the Castra scheme; with histories of fraught colonial settlement and of contemporary local newspaper accounts of first home-buyers, their acquisition of land and aspirations for the future. The paper will be illustrated by images of paintings that I have made that propose a distended continuum of hope based on the ‘promise’ of a Tasmanian idyll. These paintings draw together multiple divergent strands, ranging across personal experience, historical fact and anecdotal narrative merging them together to form a visual account of the intricately subtle, emotive landscape of migratory experience; an experience that is perpetually founded on a promise of future prosperity.

The presentation will also feature work of other contemporary visual artists whose work addresses themes related to the above, or whose work attempts to construct plausible futures from incomplete, or fragmented histories.

The presentation of this artwork and its methodologies will speculatively propose a kind of future where understanding, meaning and a sense of ‘place’ might be generated by the complex interaction of multiple inputs, perhaps none of which is explored ‘in depth’ (in a traditional sense) and that this condition of discursive superficiality might be the future we are heading towards, natural or otherwise.

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