8 – 9 December, 2016
Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI)
Melbourne

#SuperheroesACMI
The figure of the superhero has loomed in the popular imagination for generations, providing a common language for understanding the diversity of lived human experience. The popularity of the superhero figure is unquestionable. Transcending the controversial ideas of Frederich Nietzsche’s supermen or ‘übermensch’ from the late 19th century, the first superheroes appeared in the pulp magazines and serials over a century ago.

Today, the superhero has reached unprecedented levels of popularity. As the transmedia anchors of billion dollar franchises these costume-clad heroes have spread across comics, film, television, and videogames. Spider Man, The Dark Knight Rises, and The Avengers, represent only a handful of examples that have broken box office records in recent years. From the Marvel/Disney and DC/Time-Warner cinematic universes, to the best-selling Batman: Arkham games and the popular television shows Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D., Arrow, Gotham, Jessica Jones, and The Flash, today superheroes dominate cinema, television, and video games. The astronomical profits involved not only speak to the integral role the superhero genre performs in sustaining successful entertainment and creative industries, but it also explicitly acknowledges that there is a very real need in the wider cultural consciousness for the figure of the superhero. Superheroes resonate with audiences from small children through to the elderly and for this reason the project will engage meaningfully with the public and have significant social and cultural impact.

This research project is an Australian Research Council funded Linkage project that focuses on the phenomenon of the superhero figure from its beginnings up to its contemporary manifestation. Chief Investigators involved in this project are Angela Ndalianis (University of Melbourne), Liam Burke (Swinburne University), Wendy Haslem (University of Melbourne), Elizabeth MacFarlane (University of Melbourne) and Ian Gordon (National University of Singapore); and the industry partner is the Australian Centre for the Moving Image and partners Helen Simondson (Manager of Screen Events) and Russell Briggs (Head of Exhibitions & Collections).
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| 8:30-9:30  | Symposium Registration  
Venue: Lightwell (ACMI)                                              |
| 9:30       | Conference Welcome – Angela Ndalianis & Liam Burke  
Welcome to Country – Auntie Joy Murphy Wandin  
Venue: Cinema 2 (ACMI) |
| 10:00-11:15| **Prof. Henry Jenkins Keynote** (Live Via Skype)  
“What Else Can You Do With Them?”: Superheroes and the Civic Imagination  
Chair: Ian Gordon  
Venue: Cinema 2, |
| 11:15-11:45| Morning Tea  
Venue: Lightwell (ACMI) |
| 11:45-13:00| **Hope Larson Symposium Interview**  
Chair: Martyn Pedler  
Venue: Cinema 2 |
| 13:00-13:45| Buffet Lunch  
Venue: Lightwell (ACMI) Lunch |
| 13:45-15:30| Panel 1a - **Untold Histories of Superhero Comic Books**  
Venue: Cinema 1, Chair: Angela Ndalianis  
1. *Truth, Justice and the American Way: Superman Beyond the Myth of Siegel and Shuster* – Ian Gordon, National University of Singapore  
2. *The 1930s Superhero: a Genre Like any Other* – Bart Beaty, University of Calgary  
3. *What Can We Learn From the Lost Super Heroes of the “Golden Age” of Comics?* – Benjamin Saunders, University of Oregon |
|            | Panel 1b - **AKA Jessica Jones**  
Venue: Studio 1, Chair: Elizabeth MacFarlane  
2. *Road to Recovery: Fighting through Trauma and Abuse in Netflix’s Jessica Jones series* – Grace Gipson, University of California, Berkeley  
3. *Kilgrave’s Superpower and Rape Culture* – Verity Trott, University of Melbourne  
4. *Super-fan or TV connoisseur? Netflix’s Jessica Jones, Daredevil and the problem with genre hybridity and fandom* – Andrew Lynch, University of
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|            | **Panel 1c - The Sound of Superheroes** | The Cube     | Wendy Haslem    | 1. **The sound of the cinematic superhero** – Daniel Golding, Swinburne University of Technology  
2. **Disembodied Voices: Superhero Identities and Vocal Performances in Comics, Animation, Radio and Film** – Dan Torre, RMIT University  
3. **Vidding the Superhero** - Sebastian Svegaard, Birmingham City University  
4. **The linguistic development of identity in Batman and Batgirl comics** – Claudia Enzweiler, University of Vechta |
| 15:30-16:00| **Afternoon Tea**                | Lightwell (ACMI) |                |                                                                                               |
| 16:00-17:45| **Panel 2a - Supervillains**     | Cinema 1     | Martyn Pedler   | 1. **Who wants to conquer the world? Understanding the function of supervillains** – Jason Bainbridge, Swinburne University of Technology  
2. **Supervillainy at the Inter-Face: Recent Hollywood Supervillains and the Dialectics of Attractive Repulsion** – Jessica Balanzategui, University of Melbourne  
3. **Adapting Loki: From Norse Mythology to Screen** – Elizabeth Beaton, Australian National University  
4. **Against impossible odds: psychological realism and the supervillain in Austin Grossman’s Soon I Will Be Invincible** – Julian Novitz, Swinburne University of Technology |
|            | **Panel 2b - Fandom**            | Studio 1      | Dan Golding     | 1. **“Felicity Smoak is a superhero”: CW’s Arrow and the Felicity Smoak fandom** – Bertha Chin, Swinburne University of Technology  
2. **Contested Identities: the importance of continuity and adaptation in serialised superhero narratives** - Jack Teiwes, University of Melbourne  
3. **Gender, Paratexts and Everyday Superheroes? From #WheresRey to “the Chewbacca Mum”** - Tama Leaver & Luke Webster, Curtin University  
4. **Female fans, female creators, and female superheroes: the dynamics of the semiosphere** – Angela Ndalianis, University of Melbourne |
|            | **Panel 2c - National and Regional Identities 1** | The Cube | Ian Gordon    | 1. **Captain America: Patriotism, Nationalism, Fascism** – Neal Curtis, University of Auckland  
2. **When Indigenous Australians taught The Phantom to vote: Educational comics and postcolonial national identity** – Aaron Humphrey, University of Adelaide  
3. **75 Years on...Captain America’s Contemporary Altered Ego** – Joyleen Christensen, University of Newcastle  
4. **The Antipodean Anti-Hero: The Role of Satire in Australian Superhero Comics** - Amy Louise Maynard, University of Adelaide |
<p>| 19:30-21:30| <strong>Conference Meal</strong>              | ACMI Café    |                |                                                                                               |</p>
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| 09:30-11:15 | Panel 3a - **Real-life Superheroes**  
Venue: Cinema 1, Chair: Wendy Haslem  
2. **Superheroism as Biopolitics** - Holly Randell-Moon, University of Otago  
3. **“If it doesn’t hurt, it’s not cosplay” The performance of super-heroic feats at Australian cosplay competitions** - Claire Langsford, University of Adelaide  
4. **What’s in a Costume? Wonder Woman, Gal Gadot, and Female Superheroism as Edgework** - Rikke Schubart, University of Southern Denmark |
| 11:15 | Morning Tea - Venue: Lightwell (ACMI) |
| 11:45-13:30 | Panel 4a - **Superheroes on Screen**  
Venue: Cinema 1, Chair: Dan Golding  
1. **A Fantastic Time: **Cleverman and Radical Temporality** – Felicity Ford, University of Melbourne  
2. **Arkham Knave: Trickster Design in Batman: Arkham Knight** - Steve Conway, Swinburne University of Technology  
3. 'Who Is He (and What Is He to You)?': Identity, Narrative Complexity and the Hallmarks of Quality Cult in Marvel’s Agents of SHIELD - Melissa Beattie, Independent Researcher |
| 11:45-13:30 | Panel 3b - **National and Regional Identities 2**  
Venue: Studio 1, Chair: Jessica Balanzategui  
1. **Missing in Action: The Late Development of the German-Speaking Superhero** - Paul Malone, University of Waterloo  
2. **The Soldier Legacy** – Paul Mason, Griffith University  
3. **No crescents or stars: Turkish superheroes and national identity** - Can Yalcinkaya, Macquarie University  
4. **Chinese Milk for Iron Men: Contestations in the Transnational Co-Production of Iron Man 3** – Shan Mu Zhao, USC |
| 11:45-13:30 | Panel 3c - **The Superhero Body**  
Venue: The Cube, Chair: Angela Ndalianis  
1. **Are Zombies Superheroes? Understanding the place of horror in a world filled with superheroes** – Henry Kamerling, Seattle University  
2. **When Superman was grown in a tank** - Evie Kendal, Monash University  
3. **The Monstrous Bodies of Superheroes** - Michael Kobre, Queens University  
4. **Performance Capture and the superhero body in Marvel’s Universe** - Matt Delbridge, Victorian College of the Arts |
| 11:45-13:30 | Panel 4b - **Super Symbols**  
Venue: Studio 1, Chair: Ian Gordon  
1. **Groomboy... Supergroom (if you don’t mind): Fleshing out Spirou** - Annick Pellegrin, University of Mauritius  
2. **The Secret Commercial Identity of Superheroes – protecting a superheroes’ intellectual property** - Mitchell Adams, Swinburne University of Technology  
3. **Practicing Superhuman Law: The Multiplicity of Licensing and Franchising Superhero Identities** – Tara Lomax, University of Melbourne |
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<th>4. <strong>Starman: The Clothes Make the Man</strong> - Emmet O’Cuana</th>
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<td><strong>Panel 4c - Gender Identity</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Venue:</strong> The Cube, Chair: Elizabeth MacFarlane</td>
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<td>1. <strong>“If She Be Worthy...”</strong>: Gender Identity and the Feminist Superhero Chronotope in Jason Aaron’s Thor, Kelly Sue DeConnick’s Captain Marvel, and G. Willow Wilson’s Ms. Marvel - Chris Comerford, University of Technology Sydney</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Marvel’s Civil War: Depictions of Gender and Race in Marvels Cinematic Universe (MCU)</strong> - Matt Nielsen, Southern Queensland University</td>
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<td>3. <strong>She is not your average Aussie boy… or Superhero: reimagining children, superheroes, and Australian identity through Shezow</strong> – Diana Sandars, University of Melbourne</td>
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<td>4. <strong>Poison Ivy, Red in Tooth and Claw: Ecocentrism and Ecofeminism in the DC Universe</strong> - Victoria Tedeschi, University of Melbourne</td>
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| 13:30 | Buffet Lunch - Venue: Lightwell (ACMI) Lunch |
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| 14:15-16:00 | **Panel 5a - Transmedia heroes** |
| **Venue:** Cinema 1, Chair: Jason Bainbridge |
| 1. **Hercules: Transmedia Superhero Mythology** – Djoymi Baker, University of Melbourne |
| 2. **“Call it, Captain”**: superhero identity and language in Marvel Telecinematic Universe - Malgorzata Drewniok, University of Southampton |
| 3. **The Narrative Trope of Secret Identity in the Marvel Cinematic Universe** - Bailey Smith, Swinburne University of Technology |

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<td><strong>Venue:</strong> Studio 1, Chair: Neal Curtis</td>
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<td>1. <strong>Black Women Heroes, Secret Identities and Power: the Representation of Race and Ethnicity in Speculative Fiction</strong> - Kirsten McGavin,</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Super-disability: the Intersection of Disability Hierarchy, Class and the American Dream in the comics of Daredevil and the Thing</strong> - John McGuire &amp; Denise Beckwith, University of Western Sydney</td>
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<td>3. <strong>Twenty First Century Dysfunctional Superheroes</strong> - Alvin Rendell, RMIT</td>
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<td><strong>Venue:</strong> The Cube, Chair: Angela Ndalianis</td>
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<td>1. <strong>Superhero vs. Inventory: The Realm of the Super-Objects</strong> - Pia Pandalakis, Toulouse University</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Batman: Tragedy, Continuity, and Weaponised Memory</strong> – Martyn Pedler, University of Melbourne</td>
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<td>3. <strong>“Far Easier To Consider This A Dream”</strong>: Time and Identity in <strong>Batman R.I.P.</strong> - Matt Halton, University of Sydney</td>
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<td>4. <strong>Captain America and the Progressive Potential of Unreliable Narrators</strong> – Naja Later, University of Melbourne</td>
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| 16:30 - 17:45 | **Women in Comics Panel** - Hope Larson, Nicola Scott, Tom Taylor, Sarah Richardson, Naja Later  Chair: Angela Ndalianis - Venue: Cinema 2 |
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| 18:00-19:30 | **In Conversation with Paul Dini**  Chair: Liam Burke - Venue: Cinema 2 |
| 19:30-20:15 | **Paul Dini - Book Signing**  Venue: Cinema 2 |
Day 1 – Thursday, December 8

10:00-11:15 - Prof. Henry Jenkins Keynote (Live Via Skype)
“What Else Can You Do With Them?”: Superheroes and the Civic Imagination
Venue: Cinema 2, Chair: Ian Gordon

Henry Jenkins is the Provost Professor of Communication, Journalism, Cinematic Arts and Education at the University of Southern California. He joined USC from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he was Peter de Florez Professor in the Humanities. He directed MIT’s Comparative Media Studies graduate degree program from 1993-2009, setting an innovative research agenda during a time of fundamental change in communication, journalism and entertainment. As one of the first media scholars to chart the changing role of the audience in an environment of increasingly pervasive digital content, Jenkins has been at the forefront of understanding the effects of participatory media on society, politics and culture. His research gives key insights to the success of social-networking websites, networked computer games, online fan communities and other advocacy organizations, and emerging news media outlets. One of his loves as fan and researcher is the superhero, who he has published on widely. Some of his many publications include Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide (New York University Press, 2006), The Wow Climax: Tracing the Emotional Impact of Popular Culture (New York University Press, 2006), Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers (New York University Press, 2006), Spreadable Media: Creating Meaning and Value in a Networked Culture – with Sam Ford & Joshua Green (New York University Press, 2013), Participatory Culture in a Networked Era: A Conversation on Youth, Learning, Commerce, and Politics -Mizuko Ito & danah boyd (Polity Press, 2015), and By Any Media Necessary: The New Youth Activism – with Sangita Shresthova, Liana Gamber-Thompson, et al (New York University Press, 2016).

11:45 – 13:00 - Hope Larson Symposium Interview
Chair: Martyn Pedler, Venue: Cinema 2

Hope Larson is the New York Times bestselling author of six graphic novels, notably her graphic novel adaptation of Madeleine L’Engle’s A Wrinkle in Time (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), and co-creator of Boom! Comics’ Goldie Vance. Forthcoming projects include two graphic novels, Compass South and Knife’s Edge (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) and, starting in July 2016, a reimagining of DC Comics’ Batgirl. Her short comics have been published by the New York Times, Vertigo, and in several anthologies, including Flight and DC Comics’ Gotham Academy Yearbook. In addition to her comics work, Larson has explored filmmaking. She is the writer and director of two short projects. Bitter Orange, starring Brie Larson, James Urbaniak and Brendan Hines, is a tale of crime in 1920s Hollywood. Did We Live Too Fast is a Twilight Zone-inspired music video created for Mary Elizabeth Winstead and Dan the Automator’s band, Got A Girl; it was used as the centerpiece of their 2015 tour. Larson has been nominated for cartooning awards in the US, Canada and Europe, and is the recipient of a two Eisner Awards and an Ignatz. She holds a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She currently lives in Los Angeles.
13:45-15:30
Panel 1a - Untold Histories of Superhero Comic Books
Venue: Cinema 1, Chair: Angela Ndalianis

Truth, Justice and the American Way: Superman Beyond the Myth of Siegel and Shuster – Ian Gordon, National University of Singapore
Since Neal Adams and Jerry Robinson’s successful 1975 campaign to recognise Siegel and Shuster as the creators of Superman, the restoration of their creator byline, and a “pension” from DC, much energy has gone into detailing DC’s sidelining of them in the 1940s, but little attention has been given to the other hands who helped shape the character. As early as 1939 Siegel and Shuster as a byline was more a marketing tool than an adequate reflection of who produced the Superman comics. Accounts of the 1975 restoration skirt around the fact that Siegel and Shuster had not been in contact for almost thirty years following their defeat in a 1947 court case against DC. The rosy hue of the childhood friends bound together in a fight against DC loses its sheen in knowing that Jerry’s wife Joanne took a 20% manager’s fee from Shuster’s payments from DC. Siegel, and to a lesser extent Shuster, created Superman. But his rise to, and persistence as an American cultural icon is a more complex story. This paper will explore the other dimensions of his authorship in his early years.

Bio:

The 1930s Superhero: a Genre Like any Other – Bart Beaty, University of Calgary
It is a commonplace in the historiography of American comic books to date the beginning of the so-called “Golden Age” to the first appearance of Superman in 1938, thereby relegating all previous comic books to an uneasy status within the history of the comic book format. It is the project of the What Were Comics? team to re-assess the history of the form by examining a randomly generated sample of American comic books from 1934 to 2014. This particular paper will draw upon that data set in order to demonstrate the degree to which the superhero comic book story is in continuity with the formal elements evident in earlier comic book genres. Drawing on data compiled by the Canadian SSHRC-funded What Were Comics? team, this paper will extensively detail the formal characteristics of early superhero comic book
stories relative to non-superhero stories from the same period.

Bio:
Bart Beaty is a professor at the University of Calgary. His books include Fredric Wertham and Critique of Mass Culture, Unpopular Culture: Transforming the European Comic Book in the 1990s, Comics Versus Art, Twelve Cent Archie, and The Greatest Comic Book of All Time: Symbolic Capital and the Field of American Comic Books (with Benjamin Woo).

What Can We Learn From the Lost Super Heroes of the “Golden Age” of Comics? – Benjamin Saunders, University of Oregon

It’s an oversimplification to say that the comic book industry in America began with the publication of Action Comics #1; but it’s nevertheless true that in the wake of Superman’s phenomenal success comic books were transformed from a near-insignificant branch of periodical publication into one of the most popular and lucrative forms of mass entertainment in the country. Numerous creators and companies tried to recreate Siegel and Shuster’s hit formula; in fact, by one estimate, around seven hundred different costumed do-gooders appeared during the boom decade of 1938-1947. In the course of this paper, I’ll look at a small sample of the less well-known superheroes from the early 1940s, such as Amazing Man, The Black Terror, The Boy King, and the Zebra. Extrapolating from these examples, I’ll make some claims about how the economic and creative circumstances in which these characters were produced shaped the early conventions of the genre.

Bio:
Elite & Famous: Subverting gender in the Marvel Universe with Jessica Jones – Nicholas William Moll, Federation University of Australia

Both the Netflix television series *Jessica Jones*, and its source text, the comic book entitled *Alias*, are set within an expanded Marvel Universe. The television series, however, operates on a far more limited scope than its comic book counterpart. Where *Jessica Jones* makes allusions to an expanded universe, referring to but never displaying characters and events depicted in *The Avengers* and other films, *Alias* frequently contrasts Jessica herself with a wide range of mainstream superheroines such as Captain Marvel, Spider-Woman and Phoenix. This paper argues that *Jessica Jones* presents a form of superhero literature that subverts hierarchies of gender, class and ideology frequently enshrined in costumed adventure narratives.

Bio:
Dr. Nicholas William Moll is a lecturer and researcher at Federation University Australia and freelance game designer with a particular interest in the cross-period and production analysis of media franchises. He has recently completed his PhD at the University of Ballarat, examining iconic representations of race in franchise media – focusing specifically on Tonto within *The Lone Ranger*.

Road to Recovery: Fighting through Trauma and Abuse in Netflix’s Jessica Jones series – Grace Gipson, University of California, Berkeley

What does it mean to survive a traumatic experience, and how is portrayed in the media? Based on the Marvel comic book superheroine of the same name, audiences of the Netflix series *Jessica Jones* watch Jessica rebuild her personal life and career as a sardonic, quick-tempered private detective in Hell's Kitchen, New York City. As a neo-noir, psychological thriller the series bravely and critically tackles such provocative topics as rape, assault, trauma, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This paper seeks to map out a “5-step plan to healing and recovery” in conjunction with Silvan Tomkins Affect theory to create an optimal mental health blueprint through the interconnectedness of four central characters (Malcolm Ducasse, Trish Walker, Kilgrave, and Jessica Jones) and how each one experiences and functions within their own trauma.
Grace Gipson is a doctoral student in African American Studies at the University of California Berkeley. Her current research project includes offering a historical and cultural analysis of the visual aesthetics of Afrofuturism via the mediums of graphic novels and comic books, and their connection/linkage to the African Diasporic Imaginary.

**Kilgrave’s Superpower and Rape Culture – Verity Trott, University of Melbourne**
The superpowers of heroes and villains have often been used as metaphors for wider cultural attitudes and issues (Haas, 1994). From symbolising alienation and the struggles of puberty, to finding strength and dealing with oppression, superpowers have been a trope used for exploring sensitive issues with a broad, mainstream audience. Netflix’s superhero 13-episode season of *Jessica Jones* is a prime example of exploring rape culture, an issue that has traditionally been ignored or suppressed, with a mainstream audience with renown success. This paper investigates how *Jessica Jones’* supervillain Kilgrave and his mind control power represent both physical and mental rape and provokes discussion into the surrounding issues of rape culture in Western society.

**Bio:**
Verity Trott is completing her PhD at the University of Melbourne on digital activism and feminist theory. She researches feminist issues in the digital world, specifically looking at women’s relationship to technology and how technology may be used to oppress and liberate women.

**Super-fan or TV connoisseur? Netflix’s Jessica Jones, Daredevil and the problem with genre hybridity and fandom – Andrew Lynch, University of Melbourne**
With Netflix series *Daredevil* (Drew Goddard, 2015-) and *Jessica Jones* (Melissa Rosenberg, 2015-), superheroes are establishing a significant place in the realm of “prestige” television, but not without difficulty. Netflix’s recent forays into producing its own branded ‘Quality TV’ for a “quality” audience (Netflix Originals) become problematic when an art-TV aesthetic is combined with the Superhero genre. This paper will interrogate whether Quality TV and Superheroes are fundamentally incompatible without a total reconsideration of what makes one fandom more culturally valuable than another.

**Bio:**
Andrew Lynch is a doctoral candidate, lecturer and course-coordinator in The School of Culture and Communication at The University of Melbourne. His current research is in the field of television, and the contemporary mainstreaming of the “Quality” aesthetic and genre entertainment fandom.
The sound of the cinematic superhero – Daniel Golding, Swinburne University of Technology
For the cinematic superhero, identity has historically been tied up in music. In film music, wrote Theodor Adorno with Hans Eisler in *Composing for the Films* “the motif becomes the slogan,” and for the cinematic superhero, the slogan became identity. Certain musical modes have become indelibly associated with particular superheroes: John Williams’ fanfare for *Superman* (1978), or Danny Elfman’s gothic brass for the Burton Batman films (1989, 1992) defined each character in the popular imagination as much as the visual hooks of the Superman shield or the Bat signal. In the contemporary era of filmmaking, however, such clearly identifiable melodies are no longer in vogue in Hollywood, and the superhero’s musical identity has accordingly been reworked. This paper will argue, through an analysis of Hans Zimmer’s music for the recent *The Dark Knight* Batman films, and *Man of Steel* that the leitmotif has been transformed beyond all recognition.

Bio:
Dr Dan Golding is a lecturer in Media and Communications at Swinburne University. He has written on film, music, and videogames for the ABC, The Australian, Metro Magazine, and BuzzFeed, and recently presented for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra’s concert of film composer Bernard Herrmann’s work.

Disembodied Voices: Superhero Identities and Vocal Performances in Comics, Animation, Radio and Film – Dan Torre, RMIT University
This paper will examine the voice and vocal performance of the superhero, demonstrating how these can signify and complicate a character’s identity. It will survey a variety of superheroes ranging from Batman to Deadpool, from the Shadow to the X-Men. Of significant interest will be the manner in which these vocal representations have been transferred across media, including comics, animation, radio, and live-action film. Sometimes, as part of their superhero disguise, the character will dramatically alter their vocal performance. As it is taken out of context (disembodied from its civilian form) it rarely seems to disclose its true identity.
Bio:
Dan Torre is a lecturer in the Bachelor of Design – Animation and Interactive Media degree program in the School of Media and Communication at RMIT University. He has written widely on animation, media and popular culture. He has several books forthcoming, including Animation: Process, Cognition and Actuality, which is being published by Bloomsbury Academic in 2017.

Vidding the Superhero - Sebastian Svegaard, Birmingham City University
In this paper, I will explore some of the ways in which vidders portray superheroes, focusing especially on those vids that engage critically with their source(s). Vidders are experts in understanding the media they remix. Be it by de- and re-constructing heroes, queering the (hyper)masculine or critiquing the implicit glorification of certain forms of violence, fans and vidders have something to say. In creating their critique, vidders not only recut film, but also use a unique audio-visual language in which the music plays a vital part. This is what I will unwrap and present, using examples as well as theory drawn from film music theory and remix theory.

Bio:
Sebastian Svegaard has an M.A. in musicology from the University of Copenhagen, and currently pursuing PhD studies in the Birmingham School of Media at Birmingham City University, where he is working on a project regarding the use of music in vids.

The linguistic development of identity in Batman and Batgirl comics – Claudia Enzweiler, University of Vechta
Many characters in DC’s Batman universe undergo decades-long development. This often includes assuming many superhero roles, such as advancing from sidekick to independent fighter. Some changes which accompany these transitions are obvious, like the altered name or costume, but the characters are also given new ways of speaking. The changes in language are often gradual and include vocabulary adjustments and new patterns of speaking and being spoken to. This paper focuses on the character Stephanie Brown as she talks her way through the identities of the rejected vigilante Spoiler, the failed sidekick Robin and finally the fully-accepted heroine Batgirl from 1992-2011. The speech of her talk balloons will be analyzed using the Conversation Analysis framework by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson.

Bio:
Claudia Enzweiler is pursuing her doctorate in English linguistics at the University of Vechta, the topic of research being comic book talk. She lectures at the University of Wuppertal.
Who wants to conquer the world? Understanding the function of supervillains – Jason Bainbridge, Swinburne University of Technology

Identifying as either a superhero or a supervillain means that an individual necessarily operates outside the law. Taking on the identity of a superhero means supplementing law with divine justice while taking on the identity of a supervillain means inverting the law in favour of a new system that best serves a personal vision for how society should operate. In this paper I consider what this “super” prefix means in relation to these two identities, drawing on Nietzsche’s original definition of the übermensch (superman) and its relationship to legal concepts such as the state of exception, sovereign power and substantive justice. These relationships will be mapped across a number of examples – including Doctor Doom, the Joker and Lex Luthor - arguing that it is the supervillain, rather than the superhero, that is most illustrative of these concepts in play.

Bio:
Jason Bainbridge is Chair of the Department of Media and Communication in the Faculty of Health Arts and Design at SUT in the fields of Media, Journalism, Cinema and Screen Studies and Law.

Supervillainy at the Inter-Face: Recent Hollywood Supervillains and the Dialectics of Attractive Repulsion – Jessica Balanzategui, University of Melbourne

This paper explores the ways in which recent superhero films establish a self-reflexive dialogue between the attractive male star and the hideous diegetic supervillain via a close consideration of the facial transformations involved in Lee Pace’s Ronan (Guardians of the Galaxy), Oscar Isaac’s Apocalypse (X-Men: Apocalypse) and Dane Dehaan’s Green Goblin (The Amazing Spider-Man 2). I suggest that the supervillains of these recent superhero films create a multilayered and meta-textual dialogue, as they incite consideration of the interface between the comic book character upon which the film’s supervillain is based, the diegetic supervillain of the film, and the handsome male actor performing the character.
Jessica Balanzategui teaches screen and media at the University of Melbourne, and is a research fellow within the Transformative Technologies Research Unit. Her work has appeared in *Studies in Australasian Cinema*, *M/C: A Journal of Media and Culture*, and *Horror Studies*.

### Adapting Loki: From Norse Mythology to Screen – Elizabeth Beaton, Australian National University

Eccentric, seductive, skilled with rhetoric, full of guile, violent, and clever, the Norse god Loki’s traits are as richly varied as the epic myths he appears in. With vibrant portrayals of the “trickster” god exploding onto screens in recent years, Loki has made his mark in popular culture as well as in northern European literature and art. This paper will focus on the adaptation of Loki from the Norse myths to the Marvel superhero films. It will discuss the portrayal of Loki as “other” and therefore as a point of contrast for the “heroic” god characters. Loki’s moral ambiguity, symbolically presented in his shapeshifting ability, accounts for a significant part of his character’s popular success.

Elizabeth Beaton is President of the Speculative Fiction Academic Association. Her chapter on female Machiavellian characters features in the anthology *Women of Ice and Fire* (Bloomsbury, 2016), and her creative writing has been published in a range of journals.

### Against impossible odds: psychological realism and the supervillain in Austin Grossman’s *Soon I Will Be Invincible* – Julian Novitz, Swinburne University of Technology

Austin Grossman’s *Soon I Will Be Invincible* (2007) serves as a rare example of a novel that not only delivers a super heroic narrative, but also one that explores the voices, perspectives and understandings of power and morality possessed by its characters in an original manner, particularly with regard to one of the novel’s dual protagonists: the supervillain Dr Impossible. *Soon I Will Be Invincible* Grossman delivers an almost unique perspective on the nature of the supervillain by using the psychological realism long associated with the form of the novel to examine various conventions from Golden, Silver and Dark Age comic book narratives.

Julian Novitz is a lecturer in writing at the Swinburne University of Technology. He is the author of *Little Sister* (Vintage, 2012), *Holocaust Tours* (Vintage, 2006) and *My Life and Other Stories* (Vintage, 2004) and his work has been published in *The Penguin Book of Contemporary New Zealand Stories*, *Best New Zealand Fiction*, *The Sydney Review of Books*, *Wet Ink*, *Landfall*, *The NZ Listener* and *Sport*.
**“Felicity Smoak is a superhero”: CW’s Arrow and the Felicity Smoak fandom – Bertha Chin, Swinburne University of Technology**

Felicity Smoak was initially introduced as a sidekick character on the CW’s adaptation of DC’s Green Arrow comics, branded and marketed as Arrow. In February 2014, fans of Felicity Smoak organised a Twitter campaign to trend the phrase: “Felicity Smoak is a superhero” where fans tweet the producers, writers and cast with favourite moments from the show and digital comics in which they consider her to be a superhero. In this paper, I propose that ensemble TV shows like Arrow have created popular characters that are independent of the original text they were adapted from, and as a result this has created “character fandoms” which serves as fans’ entry into comics that is consistently experimenting with, and incorporating transmedia and paratextual fan readings.

**Bio:**

Bertha Chin is Lecturer of Communication at Swinburne University of Technology. Her work on fan labour, anti-fandom, crowdfunding and social media appears in journals such as Social Semiotics, Journal of Science Fiction Film and Television, and Participations.

**Contested Identities: the importance of continuity and adaptation in serialised superhero narratives - Jack Teiwes, University of Melbourne**

For fans of comic book superheroes the term continuity has a complex and multi-faceted implication. These revisions, known as retcons, are generally enacted with the purpose of updating or re-envisioning characters for new audiences. This can often have a disruptive effect on their fundamental identity, leading to ructions between audiences perceptions of superheroes correct or definitive iterations. I shall discuss these issues using Superman and Batman (the latter less frequently retconned yet more widely diverse reinterpretations of his identity). The distillation of complex histories of character identity shall also be demonstrated via recent television adaptations of Supergirl and Green Arrow.

**Bio:**

Jack Teiwes has recently received a PhD from the University of Melbourne for his thesis ‘Crisis of Infinite Intertexts! Continuity as Adaptation in the Superman Multimedia Franchise’.
Gender, Paratexts and Everyday Superheroes? From #WheresRey to “the Chewbacca Mum” - Tama Leaver & Luke Webster, Curtin University

Fan activity, including fan discord, acts paratextually, influencing the expectations of, and affective engagement with, franchises. In different ways, both Avengers: Age of Ultron and Star Wars: The Force Awakens drew the ire of fans for the lack of promotion for their respective female characters, especially in relation to marketing and toy availability. In the lead up to both films, the #wheresblackwidow and #wheresrey campaigns brought attention to the lack of gender diversity in the construction and marketing of these properties, and superhero culture in general. This paper will map the impact of and reaction to both the parallel #WheresBlackWidow/#WheresRey protests and the overnight emergence of Candace Payne as “the Chewbacca mum” in order to offer a sketch of the way superhero identities operate paratextually, linking the everyday, narrative storyworlds, and fan practices, in complex and overlapping ways.

Bios:
Dr Tama Leaver is a senior lecturer in the Department of Internet Studies at Curtin University. He is the author of Artificial Culture: Identity, Technology and Bodies (Routledge, 2012); co-editor of An Education in Facebook? Higher Education and the World’s Largest Social Network (Routledge, 2014); and Social, Casual and Mobile Games: The Changing Gaming Landscape (2016).

Luke Webster is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Internet Studies at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia. He is currently researching transmedia storytelling and the evolution of the communal narrative.

Female fans, female creators, and female superheroes: the dynamics of the semiosphere – Angela Ndalianis, University of Melbourne

In his essay ‘On the Semiosphere’ (2005 [1984]) and later in his book Universe of the Mind: the Semiotics of Culture (2001 – originally published in 1990) the Russian semiotician Yuri Lotman outlined his theory of “the semiosphere”, which he understood as “the semiotics of culture”. Focusing on examples that include recent incarnations of Batwoman, Batgirl, Supergirl/Batgirl, Wonder Woman, DC’s Superhero Girls, Marvel’s A-Force, X-23 (the clone-daughter of Wolverine), the new Thor as the goddess of Thunder, Ms.Marvel and others it will be argued that a shifting fan demographic and marketing imperatives have pressured the comics industry in particular to rethink its approach to gender related issues.

Bio:
Angela Ndalianis is Director of the Transformative Technologies Research Unit and Professor in Screen Studies at The University of Melbourne. Her publications include Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment (2004), Science Fiction Experiences (2010), The Horror Sensorium: Media and the Senses (2012) and The Contemporary Comic Book Superhero (editor, 2008).
Captain America: Patriotism, Nationalism, Fascism – Neal Curtis, University of Auckland
The identity of Captain America has always been a problem. Not his secret identity, but his identity as an American patriot. Recently the character has caused controversy not only by giving the title to a black character, Sam Wilson, who immediately took a stance against the racist rhetoric of Donald Trump, but also through the disclosure that the original Captain America, Steve Rogers, has been a Hydra (Nazi) agent all along. This paper looks at the ways that Captain America/Steve Rogers, a New Deal Democrat, has continually defined himself against right-wing zealots that have sought to take his title. Born as a propaganda tool to encourage the US government and the American people to join World War II, the paper considers the ways Captain America has explored what it means to be a patriot and what it means to be American.

Bio:
Neal Curtis is Associate Professor in Media, Film and Television at the University of Auckland. He has published widely in the area of critical theory, including War and Social Theory: World, Value, Identity, 2006; Idiotism: Capitalism and the Privatization of Life, 2013; and Sovereignty and Superheroes, 2016.

When Indigenous Australians taught The Phantom to vote: Educational comics and postcolonial national identity – Aaron Humphrey, University of Adelaide
In many ways, The Phantom represents an imperialist fantasy: its hero is a white man of European heritage who is uniquely able to exploit the myths and culture of the jungle to fight for the natives of the fictional African nation Bangalla. However, there are aspects of hybridity and contradiction in the identity of The Phantom: his identity collapses myth and man, while his heritage combines aspects of both colonized and colonizer. This paper will explore how The Phantom can be understood as a symbol of Australia’s national identity through an analysis of two educational comics produced by the Australian Electoral Commission: The Phantom Enrolls and Votes and Vote 1 Phantom. These officially licensed comics were intended to increase voter participation among Indigenous Australians, and feature an incarnation of The Phantom who seems to a member of an Indigenous Australian community.
Bio:
Aaron Humphrey recently completed his Ph.D. on comics and pedagogy at the University of Adelaide. He is a co-organiser of the Inkers and Thinkers symposium. His research has been published in Media International Australia, Digital Humanities Quarterly, Composition Studies and The Comics Grid.

75 Years on...Captain America’s Contemporary Altered Ego – Joyleen Christensen, University of Newcastle
This paper considers the complex interplay between canon storyline and audience interpretations of various facets of the Captain America superhero identity. Specifically, I will examine how fans select and play with certain qualities of the superhero persona to demonstrate how the trajectory of the character throughout the MCU’s Captain America/Avengers film series can convincingly be explained in terms of Steve Rogers’ movement away from unquestioning, altruistic patriotism towards a more nuanced embracement of individual aspiration and desire.

Bio:
Dr Joyleen Christensen is a Lecturer at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Her chief research interest is celebrity and fan cultures in film, television, and music.

The Antipodean Anti-Hero: The Role of Satire in Australian Superhero Comics - Amy Louise Maynard, University of Adelaide
The superhero genre has always been present in what I will refer to as the first and second periods of Australian comics production. My paper will argue that the satire of superheroes within these time periods represented the authors addressing broader socio-political issues in Australian society, such as cultural cringe, multiculturalism, and gender roles. These comics also revealed the authors' knowledge and affections for the genre, and this knowledge was how they managed to culturally appropriate what was seen as an ‘American’ genre for an Australian audience.

Bio:
Amy Louise Maynard is a PhD candidate at the University of Adelaide, and her research focuses on modern Australian comics production as a creative industry. She is the co-founder of the Inkers and Thinkers Interdisciplinary Symposium, a comics studies conference based in South Australia. In 2015 she contributed book chapters to Cultures of Comics, ed. Casey Brienza and Paddy Johnston, to be published by Palgrave MacMillan, and The Comics World: Graphic Novels and Their Publics, ed. Benjamin Woo and Jeremy Stoll, to be published by University Press of Mississippi.

The Real-Life Superhero (RLSH) movement is a worldwide community centred on creating and utilising superhero identities as vehicles for community action initiatives; these initiatives primarily include social outreach/activism, and crime prevention. This novel approach to informal social control has generated significant media attention (particularly in the United States), however this attention has largely trivialised RLSHs and reduced them to either novelty, or ‘vigilantism’. This paper examines the role that superheroes (as well as other fictional/mythological heroic figures) in popular culture play in inspiring a community of individuals worldwide to undertake endeavours of maintaining both the welfare of their communities and of themselves through the creation of their own superhero identities.

Bio:
Vlad Iouchkov is a PhD candidate at Western Sydney University. He has published in the Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice, and currently has a co-authored chapter under review for Fiction, Invention and Hyper-Reality.

Superheroism as Biopolitics - Holly Randell-Moon, University of Otago

This paper examines the phenomenon of real-life superheroes (RLSH) as exemplifying urban biopolitics. Using the work of Michel Foucault, I argue that media and community debate about RLSH as being helpful or harmful to the community centre on the fundamental affirmation that ‘abnormal’ or ‘criminal’ bodies ought to be excised from urban spaces. Debate about the civic role of RLSH does not contest that some bodies have the right to arrogate power and technology to themselves in the defence of cities. A biopolitical reading of superhero texts and their extension into RLSH reveals a social and political paradigm where power is economised and appropriated to the ‘right’ bodies in order to protect the health of the community as a whole.

Bio:
Holly Randell-Moon is a Lecturer in Communication and Media at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Her publications on popular culture, biopower, gender, and sexuality have appeared in the edited book collections Common Sense: Intelligence as Presented on Popular Television.
“If it doesn’t hurt, it’s not cosplay” The performance of super-heroic feats at Australian cosplay competitions - Claire Langsford, University of Adelaide

Like Clark Kent becoming Superman, cosplayers’ physical transformations can empower them. Cosplayers have the opportunity to playfully explore different identities, express an aspect of self kept hidden in other contexts, and create new social connections through shared fandom. Drawing on the presenter’s ethnographic fieldwork at Australian cosplay competitions, this presentation explores how the concept of heroics plays an integral role in defining the aesthetic and ethical values of the practice. While cosplayers play at being superheroes many are also simultaneously engaged in the serious business of identity construction and struggles for recognition as master practitioners. Cosplayers tell stories about heroic feats achieved by individuals – their ability to create technically challenging costumes and props, to transform their bodies, or to demonstrate intricate knowledge of characters and texts. The narratives pit the heroic cosplayer against technical challenges and physical pain.

Bio:
Claire Langsford is a Visiting Fellow at the University of Adelaide’s Department of Anthropology and Development Studies. Her essay in Manga Vision: Cultural and Communicative Perspectives (2016), examined Australian cosplayers’ material reinterpretation of Japanese graphic novels.

What’s in a Costume? Wonder Woman, Gal Gadot, and Female Superheroism as Edgework - Rikke Schubart, University of Southern Denmark

In a 2016 talk show, actress Gal Gadot said she almost fainted when trying on her costume and that the hardest part of shooting was the cold of winter – this for her role as Wonder Woman in Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice (2016), before the character’s first real-action cinematic feature film, Wonder Woman (Patty Jenkins, 2017). Gadot’s comments capture the challenge of the female superhero costume: She is as able as male colleagues, yet in high heels, has long hair, and is squeezed into a skimpy outfit. The paper examines the negotiation between the comic book character and a modern awareness of gender.

Bio:
Rikke Schubart is Associate Professor at the University of Southern Denmark. Her research is on emotions, gender, and genre. Recent publications include Women of Ice and Fire: Gender, Game of Thrones, and Multiple Gender Engagements (2016, co-edited with A. Gjelsvik) and Super Bitches and Action Babes: The Female Hero in Popular Cinema, 1970-2006 (2007).
Missing in Action: The Late Development of the German-Speaking Superhero - Paul Malone, University of Waterloo

The creation of Siegel and Shuster’s Superman (1938) and the superhero genre in American comics occurred before and during World War II, when Germany was culturally isolated. If, however, prewar Nazi journalists objected to Superman’s Jewish-American origins and deployment in anti-German propaganda, postwar critics such as Fredric Wertham (1954) saw costumed vigilantes as fascistic themselves. Yet superheroes remained marginal on the German-language market, bouncing listlessly between publishers even as sales of translated French bandes dessinées took off. At the same time, however, the “American” superhero model is constantly referred to; no longer as parody, but nonetheless using the readers’ knowledge of the genre in a tongue-in-cheek fashion that emphasizes the inherent absurdity and thus defuses the political danger of superheroic action on central European soil.

Bio:
Paul M. Malone is Associate Professor of German in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Waterloo, Canada. He is the author of Franz Kafka’s The Trial: Four Stage Adaptations (Peter Lang, 2003), and has also published on performance theory; rock musicals based on Goethe’s Faust; 20th-century German drama and film; and German-language manga and comic books.

The Soldier Legacy – Paul Mason, Griffith University

I wish to discuss the comic book industry in the US and Australia in context with the development of my own published series The Soldier Legacy, which was created with the early archetypes of the superhero genre in the 1940s and 1960s, closely in mind. While I aimed to create an Australian action/adventure series, I wanted to keep the world rooted loosely in fact, and at the same time, try to capture the nature of what Australia considers to be “heroic”; hence, like some early examples of Australian comics, base the character/s on aspects of the core underpinnings of the ANZACs.

Bio:
Dr. Paul Mason (DVA) is a comic book illustrator/writer, sessional lecturer and course convener in drawing, visual storytelling and sequential art at the Griffith Film school, Queensland College of Arts, Griffith University. Paul is creator of The Soldier Legacy; an Australian action-adventure comic book /trade paperback series, published by Black House Comics for several years.
No crescents or stars: Turkish superheroes and national identity - Can Yalcinkaya, Macquarie University

American superheroes entered into the Turkish imagination early on, with Turkish translations of comics like Superman and Batman appearing in periodicals, and serials being shown in cinemas. This inspired a generation of Turkish filmmakers in the 1960s and 1970s to make their own versions of Superman, Batman and Spider-Man, often creating characters that are assemblages of various American superheroes. When it came to comics, though, Turkish artists did not prefer to endow their creator-owned heroes with superhuman traits until the late 1990s. This paper aims to present an overview of Turkey’s relationship with superheroes, with particular focus on work created by Turkish artists. The paper explores the strategies Turkish creators employed to nationalise the American genre of superhero comics, with reference to settings, characters and the use of local symbolism and mythologies.

Bio:
Can Yalcinkaya is a Senior Teacher at Macquarie University International College where he is coordinator of Media and Communications, IT, and Engineering Diploma programs, as well as teaching Media and Communications units. He received a PhD degree in Media, Music, Communications and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University.

Chinese Milk for Iron Men: Contestations in the Transnational Co-Production of Iron Man 3 - Shan Mu Zhao, University of Southern California

Iron Man 3 (2013) was a recent China-Hollywood co-production, which represents a shift from Iron Man’s original context of creation in the 1960s when the franchise dealt with fears of Communism in Asia and featured the Mandarin as a Chinese villain. Iron Man 3 was partially funded by China’s DMG Entertainment, contains Chinese product placement, and cast Fan Bingbing and Wang Xueqi as doctors who help save Tony Stark. I will examine multiple discourses from China around the film and argue that they exemplify how superheroes, presented through transnationally co-produced feature films, can help articulate non-American social concerns and prompt debate regarding the status of sidekicks on an international scale.

Bio:
Shan Mu Zhao is a doctoral candidate in the Department of American Studies and Ethnicity, University of Southern California. She has contributed essays to Drawing New Colour Lines: Transnational Asian American Graphic Narratives and The Power of Culture: Encounters Between China and the United States, as well as an entry to Salem Press’s Critical Survey of Graphic Novels series.
Are Zombies Superheroes? Understanding the place of horror in a world filled with superheroes - Henry Kamerling, Seattle University

The horror and superhero genres have long overlapped, sharing a similar presentation of fantastic bodies and imaginations of societies in distress. Focusing on recent works, this paper will explore the complex intersections between the worlds of vampires, zombies and superheroes. We will look at the presentation of monstrous and heroic bodies, examining their many shared special abilities: amazing strength, heightened senses, remarkable endurance, and occasionally magical or supernatural abilities. These extraordinary bodies often produce conflicted identities for both heroes and undead. Some heroes see themselves as monsters (the Thing and the Hulk in particular) and some monsters see themselves as heroic (Blade or Gwen from iZombie). At other times superheroes are treated as monsters by a skeptical populace (conversations that unfold throughout the X-Men universe) while Marvel Zombies, erases the line between horror and heroes completely.

Bio:
Henry Kamerling is a professor in the history department at Seattle University where he serves as the Director of the Justice in a Diverse Society learning community and the Director of the Public History Internship Program. His book, State, Prison, Convict: Mass Incarceration in Illinois and South Carolina, 1865-1900, will be published late 2016.

When Superman was grown in a tank - Evie Kendal, Monash University

This presentation will focus on the representation of ectogenesis technology in the Superman franchise, paying particular attention to the films Justice League: Gods and Monsters (2015), Man of Steel (2013) and Superman Doomsday (2007). Ethical issues arising from these texts include ambiguity regarding kinship ties for an artificially gestated person, and social fears regarding what is “natural” and “unnatural.” There are also related concerns surrounding personal identity, involuntary genetic parenthood, and reproductive cloning. As a figure intended to represent an idealised version of humanity, the treatment of Superman’s gestation and birth over time is relevant when interrogating attitudes toward emerging reproductive technologies and what makes us human.
Evie Kendal is a bioethicist and literary theorist from Monash University. She currently works as an Assistant Lecturer at the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at the Alfred Hospital, and is the Editor-in-Chief of the scholarly journal *Colloquy: text, theory, critique*.

**The Monstrous Bodies of Superheroes - Michael Kobre, Queens University of Charlotte**

From the moment in 1938 when Superman hoisted a car above his head, the bodies of superheroes have been sites of fantasy, desire, anxiety, and violence. As Gerard Jones shows in *Men of Tomorrow*, Superman was partially inspired by Bernarr MacFadden, a proponent of the bodybuilding craze of the 1920s. But like all representations of our fears and desires, the superhero’s body is protean, changing shape over the history of the genre, evoking different ideas and themes at different times: from blunt power fantasies (as in *Action Comics* #1) to satiric deconstructions of those same adolescent dreams (in Harvey Kurtzman and Wally Wood’s “Superduperman”). This paper will survey images of superhero bodies and examine their transformations over time. How is the superhero body a locus of fantasy, and what does that reveal about the desires we inscribe on that body?

Michael Kobre is Dana Professor of Literature and Chair of the Department of English and Creative Writing at Queens University of Charlotte. His essays and stories have appeared in *Tin House, TriQuarterly, West Branch, MAKE*, and *Michigan Quarterly Review*. He’s the author of *Walker Percy’s Voices*.

**Performance Capture and the superhero body in Marvel’s Universe - Matt Delbridge, Victorian College of the Arts**

This paper examines actor’s performances in *Thor, Marvel’s The Avengers, Avenger’s Age of Ultron*, and *Thor: Ragnarok* to better understand the transformation of the body via Performance Capture. An analysis of the actor’s final transformation in these works generates new understandings of the performance of extreme physical ability, where plausibility, original movement style, and the personal characterisation of the actor are maintained. The paper discusses Heroes like Ruffalo’s Hulk alongside villains like James Spader’s ‘Ultron’. The complementary analysis of hero and villain motion captured reveals a not dissimilar approach to body: amplified, enlarged and necessarily abled by this costume. The movement of these characters inhabits the ‘body’ of the unnatural and assumes a physical ability only able to be realised through the screen intervention of animation and effect.

Matt Delbridge is Head of Theatre at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne. Matt’s recent work has been published in *SCENE, Animation Practice, Process and Production, Body Space, Technology and Nordic Theatre Studies*. Matt has two books, *Motion Capture in Performance: An Introduction*, and *Theatre & Technology* (Palgrave Macmillan) 2017.
A Fantastic Time: *Cleverman* and Radical Temporality – Felicity Ford, University of Melbourne

At the 2016 preview screening of the new television series *Cleverman* held at the Australian Centre of the Moving Image, creator Ryan Griffen made an important distinction between ‘Dreamtime’ and ‘Dreaming,’ stressing that the former was bound to the past whereas the latter suggested something happening now, something still becoming. The series title references the Dreamtime figure of the ‘Clever Man’ who appears interchangeably in Indigenous narratives as Mann’gur (Medicine Man), Kgun’diri (Forecaster), and Kgai’dai’chi (Spirit Man). Griffen’s series follows a traditional monomythic structure and puts forward Koen West as the reluctant and imperfect hero at the centre of this contemporary reimagining of the Dreamtime story. This paper will focus on Griffen’s differentiation between ‘Dreamtime’ and ‘Dreaming’ and argue that Cleverman’s use of fantastical elements disrupts colonial temporality and, by collapsing real and imagined worlds, presents a contemporary Australia still haunted by a history of genocide, government control and systemic abuse of Indigenous communities.

**Bio:**
Felicity Ford is a PhD candidate in Screen and Cultural Studies at the University of Melbourne. Her research is concerned with disruptions to the cinematic form in the visual, kinetic, aural and temporal register and how these subversive spaces correspond to questions of criminality, sexuality and disability.

Arkham Knave: Trickster Design in *Batman: Arkham Knight* - Steve Conway, Swinburne University of Technology

“So much more fun with ME at the controls!” chortles The Joker as he takes control of *Batman: Arkham Knight*. The player is relegated to passive enabler: to continue playing the game is to *play along*, leashed to The Joker’s fantasy. As hermeneutic phenomenologist Hans-Georg Gadamer reminds, ‘all playing is a being-played. The attraction of a game, the fascination it exerts, consists precisely in the fact that the game masters the players... Whoever “tries” is in fact the one who is tried’. Rocksteady Studio’s 2015 release, *Batman: Arkham Knight*, is indeed a game design that plays with you as much as you play with it. At its core, the game is obsessed with the play of identity: of the player, of the heroes, of the villains.
Bio:
Steven Conway is a convenor and lecturer on the Games & Interactivity program at Swinburne University of Technology. He has had articles published in journals such as Convergence, Eludamos, and Game Studies, and is co-editor of Video Game Policy: Production, Distribution and Consumption.

'Who Is He (and What Is He to You)?': Identity, Narrative Complexity and the Hallmarks of Quality Cult in Marvel's Agents of SHIELD - Melissa Beattie
Narrative complexity, or, in Espenson's words, '[p]laying hard to “get”', has become a hallmark of so-called quality TV generally and quality cult in particular. The television series Marvel's Agents of SHIELD is no exception to this. In this paper I shall examine how the complex and multiple potential interpretations of the characters Grant Ward and Hive (played successively by actor Brett Dalton) contribute to this narrative complexity. In addition to certain textual elements relating to identity (e.g., Ward as an undercover operative suffering from repeated moral injuries and Hive as having or being a collection of minds) I shall examine how the narrative parallels between these two characters and the characters of the rest of the MCU (and the comicsverse) can impact the interpretation of the text.

Bio:
Melissa Beattie recently received her PhD in TV Studies from Aberystwyth University, having completed her dissertation on Torchwood and (trans)national identity/-ties. She has published on fan tourism and commodification and has co-edited a conference volume.
11:45 – 13:30
Panel 4b - Super Symbols
Venue: Studio 1, Chair: Ian Gordon

Groomboy Supergroom (if you don’t mind): Fleshting out Spirou - Annick Pellegrin, University of Mauritius

Created as a “groom” (a bellboy) in 1938, the same year as Superman, the Belgian character Spirou resembles Tintin in many ways as he has become a globetrotting journalist/adventurer. A special issue of Spirou was released on 30 March 2016. It featured a short story with Spirou as “Batguy’s” sidekick, Groomboy Supergroom. The mere fact that Spirou released a special issue paying tribute to staple US superheroes is noteworthy as in the immediate aftermath of the liberation of Europe Spirou found itself purging its pages of any comic created in the US in response to a protectionist French law. What does Spirou’s interaction with Batguy reveal about France and Belgium’s complicated relationship with the US?

Bio:
Dr Annick Pellegrin is a graduate of The University of Sydney and currently works at the University of Mauritius. Her PhD thesis is a comparative study of representations of Latin America in Franco-Belgian, Mexican and Argentinean comics. She is a columns and articles editor for the Comics Forum and sits on the editorial board of Studies in Comics.

The Secret Commercial Identity of Superheroes – protecting a superhero’s intellectual property - Mitchell Adams, Swinburne University of Technology

This presentation will survey the trade mark filing activity for comic book characters in both Australia and internationally. Datasets from the Australian Intellectual Property Government Open Database, the United States Patent and Trade Mark Office and World Intellectual Property Office were used to compile trade mark applications for superhero characters. This data was then interrogated to identify filing patterns. What was discovered is a rich history of the protection of superhero identities over the past 70 years. From Marvel to DC and everyone in between, there has been a spike in trade mark applications in recent years. Of particular interest, the secret identity of most superheroes (e.g. Bruce Wayne or Steve Rogers) is not readily protected using a registered trade mark, indicating that the commercial value lies in fact in the character’s superhero identity.
Bio:
Mitchell Adams is the Research Centre Manager for the Centre for Transformative Innovation and a Research Fellow at Swinburne University of Technology.

Practicing Superhuman Law: The Multiplicity of Licensing and Franchising Superhero Identities – Tara Lomax, University of Melbourne
In Marvel Comics’ She-Hulk, the prestigious law-firm of Goodman, Lieber, Kurtzberg & Holliway specialises in Superhuman Law. This particular practice of law draws on an unconventional type of legal case file: Marvel Comics - ‘admissible in any court of law’ (#2, 2004). This paper examines how Superhuman Law presents a self-reflexive commentary on the interface between superhero identities and the franchising of comic book properties in contemporary entertainment. Putting Superhuman Law into practice, the Spider-Man franchise is a compelling case study for examining how complex licensing and the serialised/reboot form produces a multiplicity of superhero identities. The licensing of intellectual property is indispensable in understanding franchise entertainment; however, aside from its legal implications, it also informs how the multiplicity of superhero identities manifests in franchise entertainment.

Bio:
Tara Lomax is a PhD candidate in Screen Studies at the University of Melbourne. Tara’s research examines the multiplicity and complexity of franchise cinema, conceptualising the relationship between the franchise’s industrial conditions and its complex aesthetic textuality.

Starman: The Clothes Make the Man - Emmet O’Cuana
Writer James Robinson’s run on Starman broke ground in US comics with its overlaying of superhero tropes on top of an earnest drama about family and relationships. The series explored, through the doubts of protagonist Jack Knight, the sub-genre of superhero comics, its emphasis on violence and the concept of legacy. This paper will explore the choices made by Robinson in distinguishing Knight from his contemporaries by his method of dress and show how this in turn made the character more relatable to the book’s audience.

Bio:
Emmet O’Cuana is a freelance writer. His published material has featured in Hopscotch Friday, Film International, Outré Press, Decay Magazine and Aurealis. Emmet also contributed to Darragh Greene and Kate Hoddy’s collection of academic essays Grant Morrison and the Superhero Renaissance.
“If She Be Worthy...”: Gender Identity and the Feminist Superhero Chronotope in Jason Aaron’s Thor, Kelly Sue DeConnick’s Captain Marvel, and G. Willow Wilson’s Ms. Marvel - Chris Comerford, University of Technology Sydney

Arguably, three of the most popular recent superhero comic books are stories involving women. Jason Aaron’s recent take on Thor, which sees the male Norse God’s former love interest Jane Foster assume the mantle of the Goddess of Thunder, depicts a powerful feminist presence distinguishing herself from her disparaging male counterparts while inhabiting a traditionally masculine superhero’s role. Meanwhile, G. Willow Wilson’s new incarnation of Ms. Marvel, Muslim schoolgirl Kamala Khan, redefines a traditionally white and oversexualised character into an ethnically diverse symbol of female empowerment. This paper discusses how these superheroine narratives draw on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin to mark what I term the feminist superhero chronotope, a textual imprint that identifies and contextualises the recent surge in female and feminist-driven superhero characters and narratives; this imprint represents a specific spatial-temporal point in popular culture.

Bio:
Chris Comerford is a cultural studies researcher and keen superhero enthusiast at the University of Technology Sydney. He contributed to the 2015 edited collection Graphic Justice: Intersections of Comics and Law.

Marvel’s Civil War: Depictions of Gender and Race in Marvel’s Cinematic Universe (MCU) - Matt Nielsen, Southern Queensland University

The superhero genre of film is a multi-billion dollar enterprise easily surpassing the more traditional genres such as action, drama and comedy. The recent acceleration of the MCU timeline will see an increase of theatrical releases over the next few years. Through the use of a mixed model methodology employing quantitative, qualitative, structuralist and content analysis I aim to discover whether Marvel’s depiction of gender and race in their Cinematic Universe is consistent with these shifting social and cultural expectations of Western society and their global media markets or whether they need to realign their ideology to fit with contemporary social ideals.
Bio:
Matt Nielsen is a Lecturer in Animation and Digital Art (Creative Media) in the School of Arts & Communication at Southern Queensland University.

She is not your average Aussie boy… or Superhero: reimagining children, superheroes, and Australian identity through Shezow – Diana Sandars, University of Melbourne

Messing about in the basement of their home, twelve year old Guy Hamilton and his twin sister Kelly finds their aunt’s ring and at the moment when Kelly tries to put it on, Guy snatches it from her and puts it on, as a joke. From this point on the ring is stuck on Guy’s finger, and he will forever be SheZow; a kick-ass female superhero with big hair, high heels and a beautility belt. In this paper I will argue that as Shezow (2011 – 2012) re-writes Phillipe Aries’ concept of childhood as a state of dependence and innocence, to one of an agency defined by the messy, random spontaneous and impossible.

Bio:
Dr. Diana Sandars is an honorary fellow in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. Diana also lectures at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image and has contributed to the academic journals: Australian Screen Education, Idiom, Metro, The Refractory, Screening the Past and Senses of Cinema.

Poison Ivy, Red in Tooth and Claw: Ecocentrism and Ecofeminism in the DC Universe - Victoria Tedeschi, University of Melbourne

2016 marks the fiftieth anniversary of Poison Ivy’s debut in DC Comics. Initially cast as a femme fatale who was pitted against the caped crusader in Batman #181(1966), Poison Ivy has since evolved into an avid eco-terrorist. Despite her reappearance in numerous cinematic, animated and video game adaptations, research to date has largely overlooked ecofeminist evaluations of Poison Ivy’s ecocentric behaviour. This paper employs an ecofeminist methodology to assess the symbiotic relationship between femininity and ecology in DC comics. It contends that Poison Ivy’s inception into the DC Universe coincides with the contemporaneous establishment of the ecofeminist movement.

Bio:
Victoria Tedeschi is a third-year PhD candidate studying English and Theatre studies at the University of Melbourne. Victoria recently submitted her dissertation which ecocritically assessed how nineteenth-century revisions of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale literature renegotiated the ecosphere to a newfound child audience during a period of environmental upheaval.
Hercules: Transmedia Superhero Mythology – Djoymi Baker, University of Melbourne

The Biblical figure Samson and the Greek hero Hercules were both inspirations for the very first comic book superhero, Superman. Hercules then went on to become a comic book superhero himself in many different manifestations over the years. The 2014 film Hercules is both an adaptation of the graphic novel Hercules: The Thracian Wars (Steve Moore 2009), as well as a transmedia expansion of Hercules’ mythic tale as it has played out across millennia from Greek oral epic, theatre, and vase paintings to comic books, television and film incarnations. This paper argues that the 2014 film playfully understands the way that the transmedia figure of Hercules is a mythic superhero hybrid, whose meaning depends upon a complex array of associations, both ancient and contemporary, from which he can never in fact be divorced.

Bio:
Djoymi Baker teaches Screen Studies at Swinburne University of Technology and the University of Melbourne. She is the co-author of The Encyclopedia of Epic Films (2014).

“Call it, Captain”: superhero identity and language in Marvel Telecinematic Universe - Malgorzata Drewniok, University of Southampton

Marvel Telecinematic Universe offers many superheroes. Some of them keep their identity secret; others’ everyday alter egos are publically known. Thanks to the long-term narrative overarching Marvel franchises, MCU superheroes constantly change. In this paper I will look at two characters at opposite ends of the MCU spectrum: Steve Rogers/Captain America, and Agent Phil Coulson, and their development. I will explore how their journey as (super)heroes – their gradual transformation – is signalled in the language they use. I will apply linguistic analysis to comment on Steve Rogers and Phil Coulson’s portrayal: their choice of vocabulary and structures, conversation behaviour, as well as their use of politeness and impoliteness strategies.
Bio:
Malgorzata Drewniok holds a PhD in Linguistics from Lancaster University and currently works at Winchester School of Art. She has published on the language of Buffy the Vampire Slayer and on the narration in the Otherworld series. Her chapter on Black Widow in Avengers will appear later this year.

The Narrative Trope of Secret Identity in the Marvel Cinematic Universe - Bailey Smith, Swinburne University of Technology
My presentation will focus on the narrative trope of the secret identity, or more specifically the use of the superhero identity/secret identity binary in contemporary superhero culture. My analytical framework for exploring and explaining this claim is a framework originally devised for understanding the hero concept at large, one which I call the Epic/Everyday heroic framework. This framework is intended to better understand the conceptual spectrum of heroism. I will offer some suggestions as to what the erasure of the secret identity trope in the MCU might mean for the broader concept of heroism in contemporary America.

Bio:
Bailey Smith is currently completing a PhD at the Swinburne Institute of Technology looking at the manner in which Marvel Studios’ Iron Man film franchise works in a dialogical relationship with other social elements to help build an image of American heroism in a post-9/11 world.

This paper explores the interactions between identity, representation and power. There is an inherent multiplicity in the identity of superheroes. This complexity is mirrored in the identities of everyday people, with various elements of a person’s identity coming to the fore or being relegated to the background, depending on time, place and circumstance. Superheroes are more powerful than the average person, however, Black characters – particularly Black women characters – remain underrepresented, at least in the popular versions of superhero stories. This paper draws from my anthropological background, popular speculative fiction works from comic books, movies and television and the work of such writers as Octavia E. Butler and Alaya Dawn Johnson.

Bio:
Kirsten McGavin is of Lavongai (New Guinea Islands) and New Zealand (Pakeha) descent. She recently completed a three-year, post-doctoral research fellowship in anthropology at the University of Queensland, where her focus was on identity and the representation of diasporic Pacific Islanders in Australia. Kirsten’s current, practice-led research focuses on identity and the representation of “Black” women in speculative fiction.

Super-disability: the Intersection of Disability Hierarchy, Class and the American Dream in the comics of Daredevil and the Thing - John McGuire & Denise Beckwith, University of Western Sydney

Disability has been a central element of the narratives of the Marvel superheroes, Daredevil and the Thing. While both deal with the ongoing issues of their disability, Daredevil with his blindness and the Thing with his physical disfigurement, their experiences and interactions around their disability differ greatly. These two characters present different experiences and representation of disability in their narratives. While both share a similar class background, their different opportunities educationally and professionally lead them to different lived-experiences. The relations between these three elements present two very different fictional narratives that have the ability to represent and influence different discourses of disability in today’s society.

Bios:
Dr John McGuire is a Lecturer in Sociology and Criminology at Western Sydney
University. Denise Beckwith is a final year Social Work Honours student at Western Sydney University. Denise has been a disability advocate for 15 years. In 2017 she will be undertaking a PhD in Social Sciences exploring the connection between the lack of sexual education that women with disability are provided and the violence that they experience.

**Twenty First Century Dysfunctional Superheroes - Alvin Rendell, RMIT University**

What does it indicate of our 21st century society that even our fictional superheroes are deeply flawed? From comic books to the big screen, contemporary superheroes are written with more emotional baggage than in any period prior to the turn of the millennium. An examination of audience identification with the superheroes of the latter half of the 20th century in contrast with those of the 21st may help us to understand this cultural shift in the psychological health of modern superheroes and the new vulnerabilities of these previously invincible characters. This paper explores how flawed character psychology influences audience identification and how this affects the audience’s experience of immersion in the contemporary superhero feature film.

**Bio**

Alvin Rendell received his doctorate in creative media and screenwriting from RMIT University, with his dissertation *The functional relationship between laughter, thrills and suspense in the comedy thriller screenplay: an inquiry into the writing of the comedy thriller*. He has a long history of stage writing and performance and his current research interests lie in the commercial disparity between Australian and Hollywood feature films. He has created screenplays in the science fiction, comedy thriller and romantic comedy film genres.
Superhero vs. Inventory: The Realm of the Super-Objects - Pia Pandelakis, Toulouse University

Superheroes deal with a mosaic of identities; their relationship to the self is often fluid and unstable. Focusing on double-sided superheroes such as the iconic character of Superman (the first franchise in 1978-1984), I have used Stanley Cavell’s concept of a “dance of identity” and Judith Butler’s coinage of the “masquerade” to show that the superheroic true self occupies a blank space, the “in-between”. Using an analytical approach, I will try to analyze recent superheroic incarnations in the light of an “environment of objects”, a concept on which I will elaborate and which can offer a different light on superheroes as well as other media content. Looking at the latest Captain America, I will show the film functions as a toy store, not just for the spectator who can covet new gadgets, but for the heroes themselves.

Bio
Pia Pandelakis is an Associate Professor at the University of Toulouse - Jean Jaurès (Toulouse, France) where she teaches Design. She also works as an illustrator and graphic designer. She holds a PhD in Film Studies (2013, Paris III - Sorbonne Nouvelle). Her thesis focused on the representation of the American male hero on screen.

Batman: Tragedy, Continuity, and Weaponised Memory – Martyn Pedler, University of Melbourne

Both recent blockbuster runs on DC Comics’ Batman inflicted amnesia on the Dark Knight. Grant Morrison’s Batman had his memory wiped, but turned into the Batman of Zuh-En-Arrh: a Batman who could continue to fight with no other identity. Scott Snyder’s Batman had his memory wiped, only to become the dedicated charity activist Bruce Wayne, and not Batman at all. What does this ebb and flow of memory mean for superheroes like Batman? As more events are allowed to accrue in Batman’s history, is he more vulnerable to moving - as Umberto Eco put it - “through life to death through time”? Or can the Dark Knight weaponise his memories, rather than jettisoning them, and use them to become stronger?
Bio
Martyn Pedler is a transdisciplinary PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne, writing fiction and theory on superhero stories and how they mutate across different media. He’s been published on superheroes in The Contemporary Comic Book Superhero and Crossing Boundaries in Graphic Narrative anthologies, as well as Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal, Overland and Metro.

“Far Easier To Consider This A Dream”: Time and Identity in Batman R.I.P. - Matt Halton, University of Sydney

In “The Myth of Superman”, Umberto Eco argues that the events depicted in superhero comics are compelled by the demands of serial publication to take place outside conventional narrative time. The creators of Superman comics must come up with a new adventure each week, but they must not allow the character to change or develop. The resultant stories exist in what Eco calls an “oneiric climate”, an illusion of temporal progression in which true forward motion is impossible as anything that happens is forgotten almost as soon as it occurs. Grant Morrison’s Batman R.I.P., I argue, is concerned with the question of how it is possible for a character to maintain a coherent identity without being in possession of a coherent past. By attempting to reconcile the Silver Age and the present state of comics, with their radically different conceptions of time and the self, Morrison calls into question our most fundamental assumptions about both.

Bio
Matt Halton is a PhD candidate in the Department of English at the University of Sydney. His current research focuses on the history of the emotions in early modern drama.

Captain America and the Progressive Potential of Unreliable Narrators – Naja Later, University of Melbourne

This paper investigates Captain America comics and the role of unreliable narrators in understanding him as a politically progressive character. The turnover of comic creators and the necessity of ‘retconning’ (revising continuity retrospectively) for long-running superheroes always engenders this unreliability to varying degrees, but in Captain America this process is more textual and political. I contend that the anchoring of ‘Cap’ in a WWII context requires an unusual approach in narration and revision as the comic title progresses between creators. In the case of Captain America, the canonical and diegetic unreliability of narration creates an inviting opportunity for all creators to revise more challenging and progressive narratives.

Bio
Dr Naja Later is a sessional lecturer and tutor at the University of Melbourne. She has published in McFarland’s Marvel Comics Into Film and Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media (for which she also co-edited the bumper issue ‘Transmedia Horror’). She is a founder of the All Star Women’s Comic Book Club.
Women in Comics Panel: Hope Larson
Hope Larson is the New York Times bestselling author of six graphic novels, notably her graphic novel adaptation of Madeleine L’Engle’s *A Wrinkle in Time* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), and co-creator of Boom! Comics’ *Goldie Vance*. Forthcoming projects include two graphic novels, *Compass South* and *Knife’s Edge* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) and a reimagining of DC Comics’ *Batgirl*.

Nicola Scott
Nicola Scott is an Australian comic book artist who got her start with indie titles *Halloween Man* and *Illyaria*, and the Dark Horse’s *Star Wars: Empire*. She is a Sydney-based comic book artist of works such as DC Comics’ *Birds of Prey*, *Secret Six*, *Teen Titans* and *Black Magick*. More recently, she has illustrated issues of the *Wonder Woman* book, *Superman* (DC New 52) and is presently working on the *Earth 2* (JSA) (DC New 52) title with writer Tom Taylor.

Tom Taylor
Tom Taylor is an award-winning and #1 New York Times bestselling comic book author, playwright and screenwriter. Titles include the DC Comics series *Injustice: Gods Among Us* and *Earth Two*, Marvel’s *Superior Iron Man* and many Star Wars works. He is the co-creator, head writer and Executive Producer of the CG animated series *The Deep* based on his graphic novel series of the same name.

Sarah Richardson
Sarah Richardson is a researcher and lecturer at the University of Melbourne, currently writing about the nature of shame in the graphic novels of Aline Kominsky-Crumb and Phoebe Gloeckner.

Naja Later
Naja Later is a researcher and teacher at the University of Melbourne and Swinburne, and founder of the All Star Women’s Comic Book Club.
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<tr>
<td>18:00-19:30</td>
<td><strong>In Conversation with Paul Dini</strong></td>
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<td>19:30-20:15</td>
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**In Conversation with Paul Dini**

Paul Dini is the Emmy, Eisner, and Annie Award-winning writer of some of the most popular superhero stories ever across animation, film, comics, and games. He is co-creator of the *Batman: The Animated Series* and related shows and films *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm*, *Superman: The Animated Series*, and *Batman Beyond*. While working on *Batman*, Dini co-created fan favourite character Harley Quinn who makes her film debut in August’s *Suicide Squad*. Moving to games, Dini is the writer of the best-selling *Batman: Arkham Asylum* game. His 2016 graphic novel *Dark Night: A True Batman Story* is a harrowing and eloquent autobiographical tale of Dini’s courageous struggle to overcome a desperate situation. Other credits include ABC’s *Lost*, Star Wars spin-offs *Ewoks* and *Clone Wars*, *Tiny Toons Adventures*, *Animaniacs*, *Freakzoid!*, *Ultimate Spider-Man*, DC Comics *Harley Quinn*, *Superman: Peace on Earth*, and *Mad Love*. 