

# Centre for Public Culture and Ideas

## Gold Coast Public Culture Colloquium

### **Changing Pictures of the Past: New Rock Art and Contact Archaeology Initiatives in Australia, Malaysia, China and India**

Professor Paul S.C. Taçon FSA  
School of Humanities  
Griffith University

In this highly visual presentation preliminary results of exciting new research in remote parts of Australia, southeast Asia and south India are presented. These research projects began in 2008 and are linked via a cooperative network of dedicated individuals, universities and nations. They focus on change in rock art depictions in relation to contact between different groups, such as hunter-gatherers and agriculturalists in mainland Asia and Indigenous Australians, Asians and Europeans in Australia. Research in each area involves working closely with indigenous peoples and local communities as well as international teams of specialists. Results are throwing new light on the nature of style in rock art research, the initial arrival and reception of Macassans and Europeans in northern Australia, the recent use of rock art sites in remote places and the importance of depicting cultural change during many periods of the past. The contemporary significance of rock art sites is also being investigated with conservation and protection a common concern.

Paul S.C. Taçon is Professor of Anthropology and Archaeology in the School of Humanities at Griffith University. Since joining the university in 2005 he has led the *Picturing Change* research program and developed the Eagleandowl Research Network.

He is a specialist in rock art, landscape archaeology, material culture, cultural evolution and the relationship between art and identity. He has published widely in refereed books and journals, most recently on rock art method and theory and the changing nature of Australian Aboriginal art, from colonisation 40-60,000 years ago to the present.

Professor Taçon has made key archaeological discoveries in western Arnhem Land (NT) and Wollemi National Park (NSW) that have been published in journals and also have made world headlines. This includes not only the origins of the Rainbow Serpent (1996) but also possibly the earliest evidence of warfare in the world (1994), significant new Arnhem Land rock art sites (1995) and both rock art and material culture discoveries in Wollemi National Park (2003, 2006).



**Thursday 24 September 2009**  
**10:00am - 12:00pm**  
**Morning tea provided**  
**G23\_3.01 (Multimedia Building, GC)**  
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