CONFERENCE REPORT

The Humanities Research Centre and National Centre of Biography, in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery, presented Framing Lives, the 8th Biennial Conference of the International Auto/Biography Association, 17-20 July 2012.

Founded in 1999, the International Auto/Biography Association (IABA) is the leading international forum for scholars, critics and practitioners. Approx 250 delegates met for the 3-day conference, with visitors from North America, Europe, Asia and Australia-Pacific. The Framing Lives conference featured distinguished international speakers and events at the National Portrait Gallery, the National Film and Sound Archives, and at the ANU. The conference drew attention to the extraordinary turn to the visual in contemporary life narrative: to graphics and animations, photographs and portraits, installations and performances, avatars and characters - on screens, stages, pages, and canvas, through digital and analogue technologies. At the same time, the Framing Lives theme suggested the ways that lives are lived, recorded and viewed through multiple frames including those of language, politics, place, gender, history and culture. In this way it highlighted the the multiple ‘I’s of auto/biographical representations now, and the various fields of vision, lines of sight, and points of focus for critics, artists, writers, historians and curators in the life worlds of auto/biography. Conference strands included depiction and display, ethics and rights, living archives, place and displacement, media and celebrity, digital identity and social media, and creative life narrative.

Conference convenors: Paul Arthur (Deputy Director, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University); Rosanne Kennedy (Associate Professor and Head of Discipline, Gender Sexuality & Culture, Australian National University); and Gillian Whitlock (ARC Professorial Fellow, School of English, Media Studies & Art History, University of Queensland).