

# Melbourne Conversations

## Guest Curator Series with Alice Pung

### Shedding light on how we read the world: Unlocking extraordinary stories

So much of absorbing our culture is premised on the idea of reading. Yet 'reading' is not only about looking at words on a page. 'Reading' is about illuminating our world, whether it be through interpreting faces, touch, hearing and absorbing.

This panel explores reading by the other four senses from three panellists who have not, or are unable to, 'read' the conventional way - through blindness, having dyslexia at a time when it was not recognised as an ailment, or an inability to read English as a new arrival. It is important to include such people in our discussions in the 'national year of reading', and this panel takes a close and personal look at how they see the world, and the ingenious skills and insight they've developed as a result.

#### **Curator's Statement**

*Having a parent who is illiterate, and having grown up in a community where most adults were locked out by their lack of language skills, this is an issue that I feel strongly about. As curator, I wanted a truly diverse panel - one in which the panellists themselves had direct experience of disability, illiteracy and dyslexia (and not indirect advocates of these people) - to give them a voice. I also wanted panellists who were leaders in their own right. This will not be a conversation about disability and disadvantage, but rather about the extraordinary ways in which people adapt. Hopefully, it will help bridge the understanding between those who have the written word and those without.*

Date: 18 Monday June, 2012

Time: 6.00pm to 7.30pm

Venue: BMW Edge Federation Square, Melbourne

#### Panellist

**Murray Turner** had dyslexia as a child growing up during WWII, has had to shape a life around 'illiteracy', but learned to write in his older years, and is now writing a Memoir.

**Leah Hobson** is the National Policy Officer, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations and previously National Policy Officer, Blind Citizens Australia. Leah is experienced in policy development in the not for profit sector, particularly in disability advocacy at a national level. This covers a wide range of social policy areas, including human services, income support, transport, education, employment and human rights frameworks.

Since rebuilding his life here in Australia, **David Nyuol Vincent** has become an advocate for refugees and the Sudanese community. David is a Victorian Human Rights Youth Ambassador and a People of Australia Ambassador. Last year The Age named him one of Victoria's 100 Most Influential People. David has also helped set up the Western Tigers, an all-Sudanese refugee football team in the Brimbank soccer league. He is a true humanitarian and is committed to achieving peace for his people in Sudan. Now living in Melbourne and a graduate of Political Science from Melbourne University, David wants to share his story as one of the Lost Boys of the Sudan who finally made it to safety.

Guest Curator - **Alice Pung** is a writer, lawyer and teacher. The author of Her Father's Daughter and Unpolished Gem and the editor of Growing up Asian in Australia, Alice has received enormous critical acclaim for her writing. She has a deep passion and empathy for youth issues, and believes in the power of good humour (and not-so-good puns) to help surmount adversity. A qualified legal practitioner, she is currently works in the area of minimum wages part time. The rest of her time she devotes to writing and school visits.

**Melbourne Conversations is a City of Melbourne initiative.**

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