



Image: The RMS Niagara at anchor in North Harbour off Sydney Quarantine Station, 1919. Photo by N. Skinner. Image courtesy Sydney Quarantine Station image collection – NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. QS2007.195

QUARANTINE STATION

Quarantine Stations were set up at all of Australia's major ports from the early nineteenth century. They isolated passengers with diseases including bubonic plague, cholera, typhus fever, typhoid fever, yellow fever, smallpox and leprosy. Sydney's North Head Quarantine Station was the largest station in Australia, and in continuous operation for the longest period of time (c. 1833 - 1984).

During these years around 13,000 people passed through the Station, 580 known ships were quarantined and approximately 572 people died and were buried in one of the three designated burial grounds on North Head. The majority of these individuals contracted disease during their journey to Australia via ship, though people who died in Sydney of infectious diseases were also laid to rest there.

North Head was chosen as the site for the Quarantine Station because it was within close proximity to the entrance to Sydney Harbour, it was physically isolated from the population of the city and it had a natural spring, providing freshwater. The history of Sydney's Quarantine

Station can be broken down into seven distinct phases: the establishment of buildings at the Station in 1838; a period focused around settler immigration (1839-1880); a period dominated by the work of the Board of Health (1881-1909); a period directly after federation characterised by the transition of the Station's administration from State to Commonwealth control (1910-1950); the closure of the Station for quarantine purposes; the transition in management to the National Park and Wildlife Service (1984-2006); and the transition in management to the Mawland Group, a private company rebranded the site 'Q Station' (November 2006- present).

HERITAGE COLLECTION

The Q Station's diverse and varied heritage collection reflects the history of quarantine both in Sydney and around the world, encompassing documents, photographs, artefacts and associated research material dating from the mid-nineteenth century. Although small (around five thousand objects in number) the collection

contains objects which provide a glimpse into quarantine proceedings and life at the Station during its period of operation. Microscopes, medicine bottles, fumigation equipment and wax moulage bear witness to the ideas and practices of the past; while objects of everyday life such as cooking equipment, dinnerware, linen, building tools and children's toys provide insight into the experiences of those isolated at the Station.

Owned by the National Park and Wildlife Service and managed by the Mawland Group, this diverse collection continues to grow through the donation of objects from past residents and internees. The collection is currently on display in the Q Station Museum in it's wharf precinct, which is open daily.

Rebecca Anderson
*Curator and Collections Manager,
Q Station*



Image: Passengers of the MV Aorangi on the wharf of the Sydney Quarantine Station, 1935. Sydney Quarantine Station image collection – NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. Photo by Isabel Brierly. QS2007.194.2



Image: Three people wearing face masks during the influenza epidemic in Sydney, 1919. Sydney Quarantine Station image collection – NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. Photo by F. Meville. QS2007.188.1

MANLY ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

5 DECEMBER 2015 - 19 JUNE 2016

CURATED BY KATHERINE ROBERTS
IN COLLABORATION WITH REBECCA ANDERSON AND JULIE REGALADO



Images above: Site visit to the Q Station by the artists on 23 February 2015



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Manly Art Gallery & Museum
West Esplanade Reserve, Manly
10am - 6pm Tuesday - Sunday
T: 02 9976 1421
E: artgallery@manly.nsw.gov.au

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Cover image: TQ Station autoclave door, building A7,
wharf precinct. Photo Katherine Roberts

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OUT OF QUARANTINE

Julie Bartholomew
Izabela Pluta
Mandy Pryse-Jones
Ben Rak

Manly Art Gallery & Museum



OUT OF QUARANTINE

Manly Art Gallery & Museum, in partnership with Q Station Sydney Harbour National Park Manly, presents *Out of Quarantine*, an exhibition exploring the ideas of quarantine, migration and place. It also highlights the richness, beauty and poignancy of the historical Quarantine Station at North Head which for over 150 years was used to house newly-arrived immigrants, earning it an important place in the history of Australia.

Four contemporary Australian artists were invited to participate in this project and to draw inspiration from the site, its history and its movable heritage collection to create new works. Julie Bartholomew (ceramics), Izabela Pluta (photographic installation), Mandy Pryse-Jones (painting) and Ben Rak (printmaking) immersed themselves in the museological archive, natural environment and personal stories of internees to find material, resonance and links to their own professional practices.

While *Out of Quarantine* developed as an idea and became an exhibition, another significant

collaboration between Q Station staff and the University of Sydney has been running. *The Quarantine Project: Stories from the Sandstone* is a collaborative research initiative based around the former Quarantine Station which has united archaeologists, historians and heritage experts, who are documenting the many rock carvings and other markings made at the site through its operational years from 1835 to 1984. From graffiti to gravestones, there are nearly 2,000 inscriptions in the sandstone, each serving as an enduring 'postcard' connecting modern visitors to stories from the past. These stories of people, journeys, diseases and incarceration are being analysed and shared.

Thank you to Rebecca Anderson (Curator and Collections Manager), Julie Regalado (Education Program Manager) and Helen Drew (Visitor Services Manager) from Q Station for their enthusiasm for this partnership project. Thank you to the artists for their interest in and commitment to the exhibition concept, for their thoughtful, individual and creative

interpretations of the site and its history, for presenting workshops and for being part of an 'in conversation' event. Other public programs organised for this project have seen partnerships with Manly Art Gallery & Museum Society and *Big Kids Magazine's* artist and publisher Lilly Blue.

From school children to seniors, long-time residents to first-time overseas tourists, this amazing site is relevant, thought-provoking and, especially ripe for artists' interpretations.

We view this project as the first of many future collaborations between Manly Art Gallery & Museum and Q Station.

Katherine Roberts
Senior Curator,
Manly Art Gallery & Museum

Image: Mandy Pryse Jones, *Portholes to North Head*, 2015 , acrylic on ply

JULIE BARTHOLOMEW

I have maintained a long-term interest in Chinese culture since travelling there in 1987. When I visited the Q Station, the Chinese characters incised into and painted onto sandstone outcrops surrounding the Station's historic buildings, intrigued me. These graffiti-like inscriptions described experiences of being interned in a foreign land because of infectious disease on the ships that carried passengers far from the Republic of China.

The functional vessel, and its association with food, has been of significant interest to me as an artist working in the field of ceramics. Amongst the Q Station's heritage collection were vessels used for the preparation of food during periods of the Station's 151 years of operation. Many containers in the collection were white enamel pots and pans, mostly used for the preparation of food for the non-Asian internees. The Chinese cooked and eat separately, as segregation from the non-Asian quarantined was an established social and cultural norm during the Station's history.

Artwork created for this exhibition combined these two points of interests. Ceramic containers, produced during my residency in Jingdezhen,

China, were transported to Sydney. They act as metaphors for cultural difference, separation and transmigration. They also convey narratives, in the form of weeping Chinese characters, transcribed from the weathered



Image: Out of Quarantine, 2015, ceramic installation

IZABELA PLUTA

The Voyage series explores the relationship of the terrain to the significance of the location while considering the notion of a voyage across geographical vastness. I am interested in the landscape at Q Station and how it shows traces of its past as well as the ever-changing nature of the site. The work attempts to address both the physical (fixed) place and the movement (flux) echoed in the way one may move towards a location where temporal and spatial shifts can occur.

The installation comprises two photo murals depicting a complex terrain of interwoven tree roots within a sandstone wall, and a surge in the ocean as it ruptures via the movement of a vessel moving on the water. Each image is mirrored and collapses into one another onto which a large plywood mounted cyanotype print rests. The deep ultramarine circle presents an abstracted form: the only suitcase held by Quarantine Station collection. It depicts a void within the deep blue space, drawing on the physical properties of a nautical device such as a compass. The cyanotype process was developed around the same time (1842) as the

Quarantine Station opened in 1833, and is a way of placing artefacts directly onto emulsion

coated paper, allowing the action of sunlight to create a silhouette thereby tracing the actual object and imprinting its negative space to form an image.

The work's content and materiality are used to spatially articulate ways of thinking about the construction of space, the landscape and the way in which these, and found artefacts, can be deciphered and interpreted. It considers an imagined geography that I construct from captured images or found objects pertinent for trying understanding one's place in the world. The work originates from a melancholic mediation on memory; of gathering and appropriating images and artefacts to suggest an illusion that is determined by a desire for place.

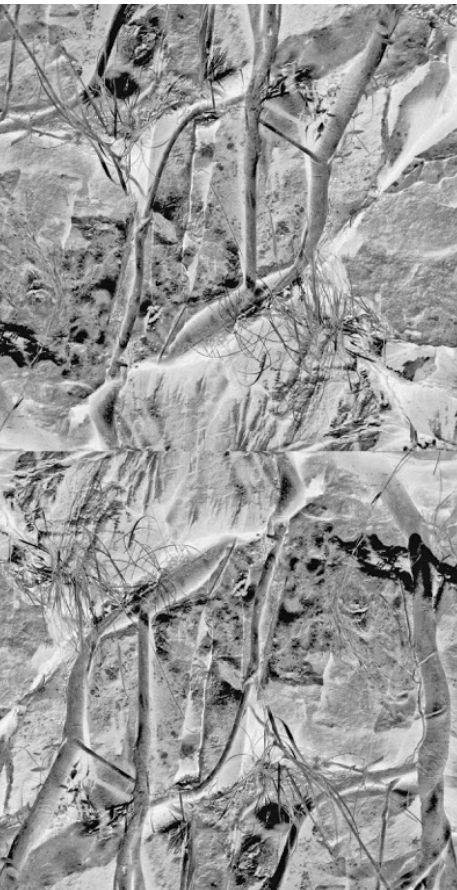


Image: The Voyage: Motionless vessel 2015 vinyl wallpaper, 282 x 360cm Courtesy the artist, THIS IS NO FANTASY + dianne tanzer gallery

MANDY PRYSE-JONES

Since 2010, I have been investigating the history of the landscape at North and South Heads and in particular the many vessels that have passed through them. My interest has developed in part from my many walks along the tracks around Dobroyd Head, which overlooks the Q Station and The Heads. This project has been an extension of a larger body of work and interests which explores the harbour's history. On my initial visits to the Station, I was intrigued by the engraved sandstone walls and how the passengers and crew of these ships left etched memories of their journey. Also of importance and not too far away are the Aboriginal rock carvings that tell their stories. From 1833 - 1984 there were over 500 ships that were quarantined at North Head with most leaving some kind of trace in the sandstone.

My work consists of oil paintings that are embedded with laser engraved drawings of some of the noted ships that once passed through The Heads. I use a limited palette, as if a black and white photograph, that has been coloured to capture 'glimpses' of the memories left by the passengers. I also wanted to capture the beauty and significance of the

landscape and the 'unknown' for both the indigenous and Europeans by bringing together shared memories and two different points of reference; one from the land, the other from the sea. Traces of memories are engraved into the paintings and are a reminder of our impact and ongoing legacy.



Image: Boree, ahead, oil on board laser engraved, 40 x 60cm

From my research, I have read many accounts by passengers who were quarantined over this period. They commented on the beauty of the landscape and wide variety of flora and fauna. I also read Dennis Folly's *Repossession of the Spirit* that discusses the importance of the monolithic landscape and ceremonial significance of the site to Aborigines.

BEN RAK

When asked to respond to objects in the collection at Q Station, I was drawn to the selection of maritime flags. My immediate thought was to interpret the flags' meanings in the context of immigration, 'refugeeism', and quarantine and detention centres.

In the Australian cultural identity, beaches hold a special place: not only is a beach a site of arrival, but it is also a location that epitomises the Australian lifestyle of leisure and embodies Australia's reputation as the 'Lucky Country,' a reputation that has drawn both immigrants and refugees looking for a better life.

No Way (Manly/Manus) seeks to compare attitudes towards immigrants and refugees in the past and present. The red and yellow flags in this work reference the typical red and yellow flag that the Surf Life Saving Australia organization places at each end of a permitted swimming area. Part of the organization's 'Swim Between The Flags' campaign, these flags indicate safety for beachgoers. In traditional maritime code, however, a red and yellow flag signals distress: man overboard. This contradiction suggests a change in reactions to newcomers: the people who came to Australia in the past (white Europeans) versus the current

wave of refugees who come by boat from Asia and the Middle East. The flags in this artwork are emblazoned with a sentence in various languages that says 'No Way. You Will Not Make Australia Home.' This statement is copied

from a poster distributed by the Australian government's Department of Immigration and Border Protection and made available in numerous languages, including the ones shown on these flags.



Image: No Way (Manly/Manus), 2015 acrylic silkscreen on cotton fabric, 250 x 120cm (each flag 100 x 120cm)