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Women crucified for the sins of the fathers: Censorship and the crucifixion motif in the art of Rachael Romero

Wednesday 12 September 2012 4:15-5:30pm

School of History Seminar Series

Adele Chynoweth, Visitor, School of History, ANU

McDonald Room Menzies Library, ANU



Magdalene Laundry, © Rachael Romero (2011)

In this seminar, which is comprised of two parts, Dr Adele Chynoweth will present her paper *Art has always saved me: The crucifixion motif in the work of Rachael Romero* accepted for the Religion, Nature and Art conference at the Missionary Ethnological Museum of the Vatican Museums in October 2011. However, the presentation was censored by the Director of the Vatican Museums 24 hours before its scheduled presentation. Dr Chynoweth will, through an application of feminism and cultural hybridity, analyse the Vatican's censorship of her presentation.

In the second part, Dr Chynoweth will present her scheduled Vatican conference paper in full. Dr Chynoweth will note the problem in privileging the postcolonial gaze, evident in consensus history's understanding of institutionalised children in twentieth century Australia.

Rachael Romero is one of over 400,000 non-Indigenous Australian, known as the 'Forgotten Australians', who, as children, were institutionalised in Australia. At the age of 20, as an art activist, Romero co-founded the San Francisco Poster Brigade (1975-1983). Her work from this period was recently exhibited in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Through a feminist analysis, Dr Chynoweth will present Romero's recent series of drawings comprising *The Magdalene Diaries* which serve as a historical record of the systematised factory-like conditions of the Magdalene laundries, in which 'fallen' teenage girls were forced to labour under the direction of the Order of the Good Shepherd within the Catholic Church.



Dr Adele Chynoweth was a curator for the exhibition *Inside: Life in Children's Homes and Institutions* at the National Museum of Australia and is currently a visitor at ANU's School of History.