

How art imitates our history

UK's Leslie Primo to visit Rocky

JENNY LIGHTFOOT

AS next year marks the 250th anniversary of Captain James Cook's mapping of the east coast of Australia, the question is posed – what has 16th century James Cook have in common with 19th century artist Paul Gauguin?

The person with the answer to that question is UK lecturer and art historian, Leslie Primo, who will give a lecture *The Cult of the South Pacific – from Cook to Gauguin* in Rockhampton on Saturday.

Mr Primo said the Western obsession with the so called "exotic" or "noble savage" began with Captain James Cook's charting of the island of Tahiti in 1769.

In his lecture to the Australian and Decorative and Fine Arts Society in the Fitzroy Room at Rockhampton Regional Library from 10.30am on Saturday, he will chart the impact of that event through painted images of Tahiti and its people.

He will look at the English and European influence in this part of the world, not only through the eyes of Captain Cook and others who came be-



RICH HISTORY: UK lecturer and art historian Leslie Primo, who will be in Rockhampton on Saturday as a guest of ADFAS Rockhampton.

fore him, but through the eyes of the artists accompanying those voyages, and into the 19th and early 20th century with the images of Gauguin.

Mr Primo will illustrate how romanticised depictions of the

island and its people by such artists as William Hodges (1744-1779), Benjamin West (1738-1820), John Webber (1751-1793), John Cleveley (c.1712-1777) and Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) helped to perpet-

uate and invent the Western notion of the exotic and the myth of paradise.

He said this background of England's exploration also saw the involvement of Royal Academicians such as its first di-

rector Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), Johann Zoffany (1733-1810) and botanist Joseph Banks (1743-1820).

The lecture will then move into the modern period and look at what happened to those

notions of the exotic in the 19th century through the work of Impressionist and Post-Impressionists who visited Tahiti, notably Paul Gauguin.

"His experiences, vibrant evocations of paradise through his paintings, and his discoveries and eventual death in the South Pacific, brings this exploration of the exotic to its conclusion," Mr Primo said.

Leslie Primo holds a bachelor degree in Art History and a master of arts in Renaissance Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London.

He specialised in early Medieval and Renaissance studies, including Italian Renaissance drawing, art and architecture in Europe (1250-1500), the Medicis and their patronage of the arts, narrative painting in the age of Giotto and the work of Peter Paul Rubens.

He gives lectures, guided tours and special talks in the National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery, London.

All interested are invited to attend this interesting illustrated address, *The Cult of the South Pacific – from Cook to Gauguin* in the Fitzroy Room at Rockhampton Regional Library on Bolsover St in Rockhampton from 10.30am on Saturday.

Members are free, visitors cost \$25, which includes morning tea.

Visit the ADFAS Rockhampton Facebook page or www.adfas.org.au for details.

Plenty of options for uncertain students to consider



DOLLARS AND SENSE
DAVID FRENCH

THE winter solstice is becoming a distant memory, and minds of parents of Year 12 students, if not those of the students themselves, are turning to life after school.

While some children have a goal and life seemingly is mapped already, many are unclear about their future and even their likes and aspirations. Uncertainty, fees, lack of direction – as a parent, and work colleague of others in a similar situation, I know it can be a time of great stress. But also, one of great opportunity.

Perhaps the biggest stressor, and in my opinion the most misdirected stressor, is the focus on ATAR. While such focus sits well with those students pursuing a clear career direction, it's much less valuable for those experiencing significant uncertainty.

Why? Because nowadays getting into university is open to pretty much everyone, not just those with high ATARs. If you doubt me then perhaps you have not looked at alternative pathways such as STEPS programs, RPL or even taking on a more general course with a lower entry requirement, and then upgrading through blitzing a GPA. And the interesting thing here is that by my (ma-



BRIGHT FUTURES: The 2019 Hastings Deering apprentice recruits. Apprenticeships are a well-recognised pathway into the workforce, but they are only one of myriad opportunities.

Photo: Contributed

ture-age entry) experience at least, university is in some ways, easier than school – not because of the subject matter but because you deal with it on your own terms, not because you were forced.

Aside from university, opportunities abound. Apprenticeships are a well-recognised pathway into the workforce, but they are only one of myriad opportunities. These days you can get "tickets" in almost anything.

Combine Cert 3 in outdoor recreation with RSA, and forklift ticket and you are well on

your way to a role on an island resort. Get a certificate in aged or disability care and the relevant "card", and you are immediately exposed to two of the fastest growing sectors in the economy. Get a construction card opens up labouring opportunities, which through labour hire companies and contractors can be a great way to "have a look around". I know of one 19-year-old who was making \$1000 a week clear, four days on three days off – hard yakka, yes, but nothing like that to get you fit, outdoors and cashed up.

A really good way to go, if you can find a university that offers it, is to dovetail short courses and tickets so they build up into a diploma and then a degree.

While there is a lot of talk regarding a "gap year", it is really worth thinking about what you might accomplish during that year.

Perhaps you want to have a break from study, or think about what career you would like to pursue. Maybe you want to save up for a car. Interestingly though, a gap year of 12 months might not be the best

“PERHAPS THE BIGGEST STRESSOR, AND IN MY OPINION THE MOST MISDIRECTED STRESSOR, IS THE FOCUS ON ATAR.

way to play it. If for example you work earning a market wage for 18 months in a 24-month period, you can be classed as an "independent" by Centrelink.

That means you are not assessed against your parent's income, and consequently might be eligible to receive youth allowance of \$455 a fortnight, if you study away from home, plus maybe some rent assistance. Not sheepstations sure, but still useful. Such arrangements also apply once you have turned 22, which means working for four years, during which time you might have saved a reasonable sum and met some interesting people.

Another attitudinal mistake, I believe, is believing what worked in the past, or for you, is relevant today in all circumstances. Consider the auditor whom I overheard saying to colleagues, that his daughter wanted to pursue a career in the performing arts.

"There's no jobs," he said, fully forgetting the wide variety of apparatuses that underpin theatre, music, film and literature.

And forgetting the billions spent on making music videos, and online games and curating lists for Spotify and the like. In

the commercial sphere, not everyone can head up Macquarie bank, and in the arts, supporting every Michael Buble, Harry Potter and Minecraft are hundreds of people all doing legitimate jobs in their version of a legitimate industry. In our business one former staff member recently left for Sydney where she has joined a major publisher. In our Melbourne office, another young woman did the same.

Participating in a work-experience placement with Splendour last year, 2 SAE students were offered full-time roles with the organising company; a friend of my son is in demand as a cinematographer and he's not even finished his degree yet. I just don't think that the facts are sitting well with the mindset of that auditor.

And for those that do decide on going to university, there now exist so many opportunities to link interests with academia. Consider courses offering Bachelor of Business majoring in sports or event management, or combining law with the business of the performing arts, or for those aspiring to help people, combining engineering with international studies. Unlike 20 years ago, almost any combination is possible, and the opportunities for domestic and international placements and other participation are endless.

All of which brings me to what I think drove me to write this article. Gee I wish I was 20 again!