

Destination Antarctica: Commercialisation and tourism in the far south



Presented by Dr Hanne Nielsen, Lecturer UTAS

Antarctica may be located at the very ends of the earth, cut off Mercator maps, and given little thought in day-to-day life. Yet for the 50,000 tourists who visit each year, it represents the trip of a lifetime. Voyages are labelled “Pure Antarctica”, “Classic Antarctica”, and “Footsteps of Heroes,” and call upon the many tropes associated with the continent in order to sell the place as a product.

For most people, such tourist expeditions are the only available way to come into direct contact with Antarctica. Yet those who head south already carry preconception and imagined versions of the continent, thanks to range of cultural inputs, including literature, photographs, documentaries, and advertising. These imagined versions are augmented by encounters with Antarctic-themed sites and products in cities like Hobart, which is a so-called “Antarctic Gateway”.

This talk traces the commercial history of Antarctica, from the first human encounters with the continent to the present day. It argues that the human history of Antarctica can be understood as a commercial history, and places modern day tourist activities within a historical framework. Drawing on her experiences as an Antarctic tour guide, Hanne will provide an overview of modern-day polar tourism practices, examine the common themes that are associated with the far south, and explain how Antarctica has come to be viewed as a product in its own right.

Hanne Nielsen is a Lecturer in the School of Humanities at UTAS. She specialises in representations of Antarctica in cultural production, and has undertaken projects focussed on Antarctic theatre, advertising, and women’s experiences in the far south. In addition to her Antarctic research, Hanne also conducts research involving tourism studies, ecocriticism, and environmental history. She has spent five seasons working in Antarctica as a polar tourism guide. Hanne is the book reviews editor for *The Polar Journal*, sits on the Executive Committee of the SCAR Standing Committee on Humanities and Social Sciences, and is a past president of the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS).

Time: 12.00-1.00pm, Tuesday 4 June 2019

Place: Royal Society Room, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Customs House, 19 Davey St entrance.

Phone the Maritime Museum on 6234 1427 for more details or email john.wadsley@maritimetas.org