



November Friends

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Author! Author!: John Birmingham
Date: Sunday 13 November
Time: 2 pm
Venue: Theatre; followed by refreshments in the Foyer
Cost: \$12 Friends, \$17 non-members
Bookings essential: (02) 6262 1698

The Canberra Series: Matt Price
Date: Wednesday 16 November
Time: 12:30 pm
Venue: Ferguson Room
Cost: Free Admission; donations to the National Library Treasures Gallery welcome
Bookings essential: (02) 6262 1698

Annual General Meeting
(followed by Christmas Party)
Date: Monday 12 December
Time: 5:30 pm
Venue: National Library Theatre, LG1
Bookings essential: (02) 6262 1698

For bookings, details of membership and subscriptions, contact:

Friends of the NLA
 National Library of Australia
 CANBERRA ACT 2600
 Tel: (02) 6262 1698
 Fax: (02) 6273 4493
 Email: friends@nla.gov.au
 Website: www.nla.gov.au/friends

Donald Friend (1915-1989)
Shoppers at Night, Bondi Junction Mall
 (detail)
 From 'Ayam-Ayam Kesayangan'
 Manuscripts Collection MS 5959, Item 2

There is in the world of writing a rather old-fashioned belief that if you're good at one genre, you should stick to it (because you're likely to fail if you don't). While it might apply to many, there are those who cross from genre to genre with ease and grace, charming new audiences and surprising old.

One such writer is John Birmingham. Most famous for *He Died with a Falafel in His Hand* (1994), an expose of squalid group-house living (later turned into a Richard Lowenstein film starring Noah Taylor), John Birmingham regards writing as a business. His ability to write fiction and non-fiction, essays, articles and historical works is, as he sees it, simply part of the job.

Since the instant success of *Falafel* and its sequel, *The Tasmanian Babes Fiasco* (1997) which was written in the same vein, John has received critical acclaim for *Leviathan* (1999), an 'unauthorised history of Sydney'. He has also gone on to write *Dopeland* (2003), a tour of Australia's marijuana history, culture and politics, and the first two novels of a new airport fiction series; *Weapons of Choice: World War 2.1* and *Designated Targets: World War 2.2*.

Set in 2021, *Weapons of Choice* plots an alternate history, a technique often used in science fiction. Birmingham has been compared to Tom Clancy since this series was released, but while it reads as a thriller, it can also read as a satire on the genre. In fact, there are many layers to this 'airport fiction' series. The third book in the series is due for release in 2006, but you don't have to wait that long to hear more of John Birmingham's ideas, because he is our final speaker in the *Author! Author!* series and will talk about his

work and answer questions from our audience at 2 pm on Sunday 13 November. If you would like to come along, please phone our Friends Office to make a booking on the number given below.

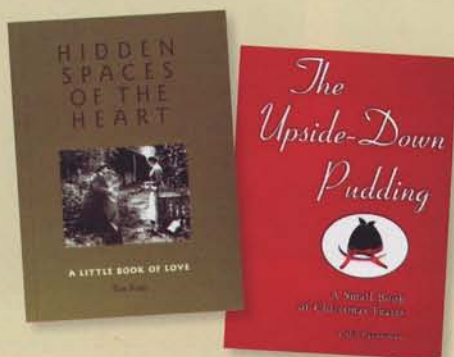
Now to another journalist of renown, and the final speaker in our Canberra Series of lunchtime talks, Matt Price. Most of you will know Matt's coverage of federal politics and sport from the *Australian*. Matt has covered the Lockerbie bombing and the Sydney Olympics and has been described as an 'editor's dream'. George Negus referred to him on ABC-TV's *George Negus Tonight* as 'a bloke who can spot a political phoney in his opening paragraph, and then gently roast him for the rest of his column'. So, do you feel like coming along to the Library at 12:30 pm on Wednesday 16 November to hear Matt reflect on 2005? Entry is by donation, but bookings are recommended. Please phone our office.

Now the only other thing left which I must remind you of is our Annual General Meeting, which will be held on Monday 12 December at 5:30 pm, in the National Library Theatre. All Friends are welcome and the meeting will be followed by our Christmas Party, during which you may eat, drink and be merry AND receive a whopping 20% off all items in the Bookshop. Please do let us know if you're planning to come along.

To book for the John Birmingham and/or Matt Price events, and for the AGM/Christmas Party, call the Friends Office on: (02) 6262 1698.

JILLIAN EDWARDS
 Acting Executive Officer
 Friends of the National Library of Australia

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