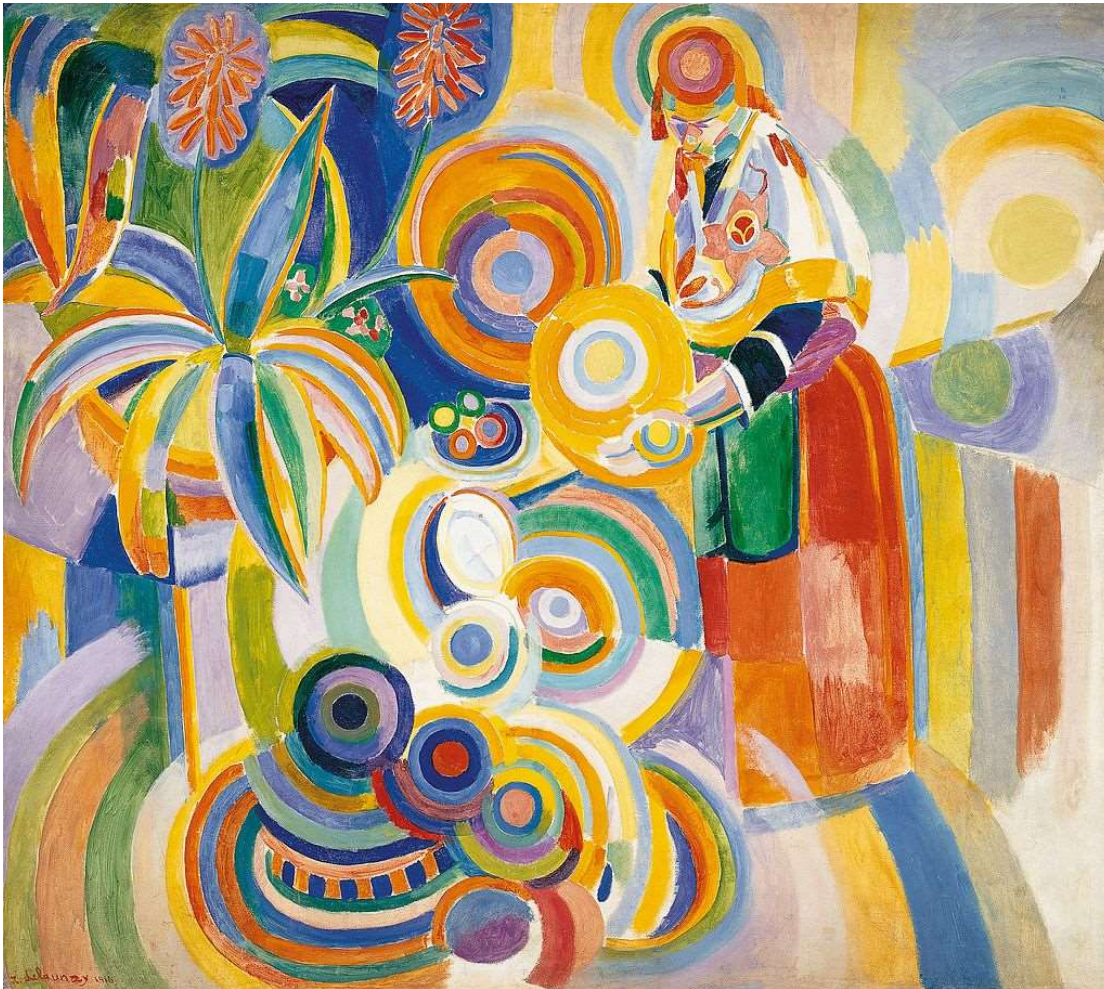


Thursday 28 April  
4:30-6:00pm, Conference Room, AD Hope 128



Robert Delaunay, *Portuguese Woman (The Large Portuguese)*, 1916

## Paul Magee

### Bringing the Original into Being by Copying It: On the Retrospective Nature of Poetic Mimesis

A long line of commentators (Johnson 1751; Attridge 1982; Ford 2021) have pointed out how little the sounds in any given line of poetry relate to the actual sounds (e.g. the pounding of horses' hooves) they are purported to imitate—even as poets and critics continue to assess poetic soundscapes in such terms. Could it be that the *mimesis* in question is less about imitating a pre-existing reality than producing, by insisting on it, a link between a meaning like “horses hooves” and a suggestive soundscape, that will come to sound like horse’s hooves for ever afterward? Maybe this is what actors do more generally: create what will come to be taken as imitation. The paper proceeds to argue that the rightness associated with poetic coinages partakes of a similar retrospectivity. In sum, the poet’s *mot juste* (“perfect word”) is not opposite to, but rather predicated upon, a direct engagement with arbitrariness.

**Paul Magee** is author of *Stone Postcard* (John Leonard Press 2014), *Cube Root of Book* (John Leonard Press 2006) and the prose ethnography *From Here to Tierra del Fuego* (University of Illinois Press, 2000). *Suddenness and the Composition of Poetic Thought* is forthcoming from Rowman & Littlefield International’s Performance Philosophy series in April 2022. Paul is Associate Professor of Poetry at the University of Canberra.

#### ANU COVID safe event:

Check In CBR app / social distancing / masks mandatory / registered COVID safety officer

**Online:** Zoom Meeting ID: 861 8419 0389      Password: 2022



enquiries: [russell.smith@anu.edu.au](mailto:russell.smith@anu.edu.au)



**CuSPP  
Seminar  
Series  
2022**