

**Birds and Language Conference CFP:**

# **Conversations *with* Regent Honeyeaters**

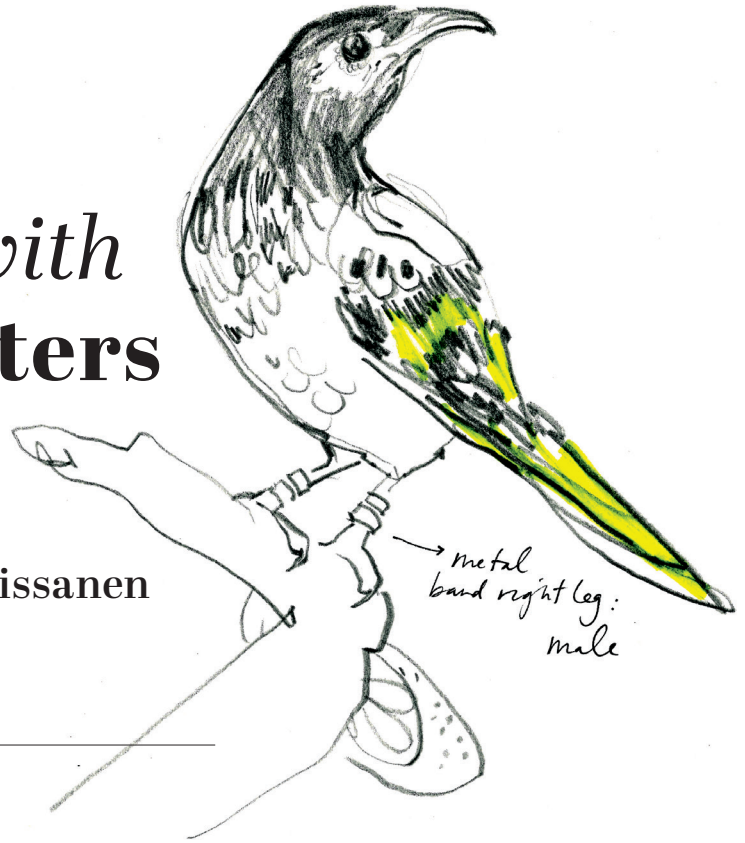
## **PART TWO —**

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Type: Scholarly presentation (20 min)

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This paper responds to the provocation ‘*how do birds and humans communicate with each other, and what might we learn from such exchange*’ by describing a series of monthly encounters with the captive Regent Honeyeaters at Taronga Zoo, intended to inform the authors’ creative practice. The Regent Honeyeater is a critically endangered Australian bird, and Taronga Zoo leads a breeding program to mitigate against the species’ imminent extinction.

We outline our approaches to ‘communicating’ with these birds. First, an evolving series of questions we pose to help us foster empathy with the birds. For example, what is a home to a nomadic bird and what might ‘future’ mean to a captive bird? Second, dedicating time to regularly visit the birds, documenting our encounters with field notes and audio-visual recording. Finally, producing visual and material artefacts in response to our observations and research about the birds. Through this process of attempting to communicate with and about the birds, we learn to value slow processes, plurality and other-than-human perspectives.

This process is part of a larger, ongoing creative collaboration titled ‘Precarious Birds’ in which we explore ways we, as designers, can give form to the complexities of human/avian entanglement in the extinction crisis, through material and visual creative practice.