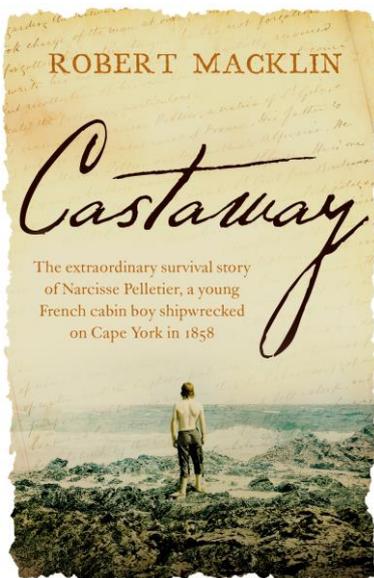


You are invited to the next Melbourne Salon at the Alliance Française
51 Grey St., St. Kilda
Thursday 8th August 2019, 7pm - 9 pm

Castaway
Robert Macklin
in conversation with Dr Elaine Lewis

The astonishing story of Narcisse Pelletier, a French cabin boy abandoned on the Far North Queensland coast and saved by the local Uutaalnganu (Night Island people) with whom he lived for almost two decades.



In 1858, the 14-year-old Narcisse sailed from Marseilles on the French trader Saint Paul with a cargo of Bordeaux wine. They unloaded the last of it in Hong Kong and took aboard 317 Chinese prospectors bound for the Australian goldfields. However, the ship ran aground on the eastern tip of New Guinea, an area known for its cannibalism. Captain and crew left the Chinese to their fate and undertook a perilous voyage in the long boat 1000 kms over the Coral Sea to a beach north of the Daintree. There, abandoned by his Captain and left for dead, Narcisse was rescued by the Night Island people with whom he lived for the next seventeen years. In 1875, Narcisse was wrenched from his beloved Aboriginal family and returned to France where he was forced by his parents to undergo an exorcism. Traumatized, he would eventually become a lighthouse keeper.

Robert Macklin re-creates Narcisse's experiences in vivid detail drawing on the work of the great Australian anthropologist Donald Thomson, who lived with the Kuuku Y'au and the Umpila people in Sandbeach country, together with interviews Narcisse gave on his return to France and research through the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). At the time, the brutal frontier wars in Queensland slowly advanced northwards and Robert weaves an unforgettable tale of a young man caught between two cultures in a time of transformation and violent upheaval.



Robert Macklin was born in Queensland and educated at the University of Queensland and the ANU. He is the author of 29 books, including *Dark Paradise, the savage history of Norfolk Island*, *Hamilton Hume – Our Greatest Explorer*, *Dragon and Kangaroo – China and Australia's shared history*, and a series of works on Australia's Special Forces and Intelligence Agencies including *SAS Sniper*, *Redback One* and *Warrior Elite*. As a journalist he has worked on *The Courier-Mail*, *The Age*, *The Bulletin* and was Associate Editor of *The Canberra Times* until 2003. He lives in Canberra and Tuross Head.

Elaine Lewis founded the Australian Bookshop in Paris in 1996 to promote Australian writers. Her book *Left Bank Waltz: the Australian Bookshop in Paris* was published by Random House Australia in 2006. She is currently co-editor of *The French Australian Review*, the journal of ISFAR. Elaine recently received Les Palmes Académiques from the French government for her contribution to French language and culture.

Cover charge (includes cheese and wine) \$20; Bookings and pre-payment essential please:

<https://www.afmelbourne.com.au/culture-and-events/special-events/melbourne-salon-2019-08-08/>