

The Archipelago of Us

by RENEÉ PETTITT-SCHIPP

ABOUT THE BOOK

Five years after first living in the Indian Ocean Territories, Reneé Pettitt-Schipp finds herself returning, haunted by memories of the asylum seekers she taught there in Australia's detention system. Why do the islands still have a hold on her? Why are her memories such troubled ones? And why can she not let go?

Closer to Indonesia than Australia, Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands are out of sight and out of mind to most Australians, but they are the sites of some of our frontier wars, the places where our identity is laid bare in all its flawed complexity – and the places where there is time and space enough to ask: can we be better than this?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reneé Pettitt-Schipp is an award-winning writer who lived in the Indian Ocean Territories from 2011 until 2014. Her work with asylum seekers inspired her first collection of poetry, *The Sky Runs Right Through Us*, published by UWA Publishing in 2018. Shortlisted for the inaugural Dorothy Hewett manuscript prize, it won the 2018 WA Premier's Literary Award for an Emerging Writer. Reneé currently lives and writes in Western Australia's Great Southern.



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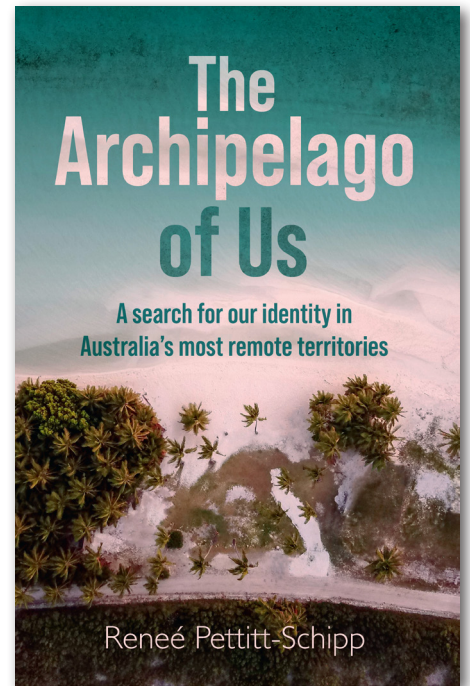
- A travel narrative, a memoir and a thought-provoking look at Australia's complicated history with Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands and the asylum seekers detained there. The book will appeal to general readers but also to those who like to delve into social justice, politics and history.
- The lens of a very personal story frames a much bigger conversation about Australian identity, compassion, engagement and social justice.
- In 2011 Reneé curated an exhibition called Thonglines: haikus by children in detention, and in 2014 she co-curated a radio show about it – called 'Tidialectics' – for one of the final episodes of ABC RN Poetica.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

'Absolutely masterful and incredibly powerful. It demanded a lot of its reader, but also offered a world that was delicate, precise and achingly human.' *Catherine Noske*

'Sensitive and subtle, superbly evocative, vivid and arresting in its attention to detail in descriptions of place and the human and more-than-human worlds of the islands.' *David Carlin*

'Profound, beautifully written, and conveying an immediacy, a sense of being there physically and emotionally. Difficult subject matter handled with empathy.' *Amanda Curtin*



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