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Temporal: The artwork.

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## **Temporal: The Artwork**

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**Senior Research Fellow**

**Queensland University of Technology, Faculty of Creative Industries**

### **TEAM:**

**Keith Armstrong (Artistic Co-Director), Lawrence English (Artistic Co-Director), Luke Lickfold (MaxMSP Design), Dr. Peggy Eby, Consulting Behavioural Ecologist (UNSW/freelance)**

**Exhibited at** Bundaberg Art Gallery, Bundaberg, Queensland, Australia, Feb 11th - March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015.

**Archive of project at <http://embodiedmedia.com/homeartworks/temporal>**

### **Statement**

The interactive artwork *Temporal* arose from a series of art-science investigations with some of Australia's leading flying fox ecologists. It was designed as a gently evolving meditation upon the complex, periodic processes that mark Australia's often irregular seasonal changes. In turn these changes directly govern the migratory movements of Australia's keystone pollinating mammals - the mega bats (Flying Foxes). *Temporal* further called attention to our increasing capacity to profoundly disturb these partners within Australia's complex, life-supporting systems.

The work's design and aesthetic constructions referenced complex readings of Australian seasonal patterns provided by Grey Headed Flying Fox expert and behavioural ecologist Dr. Peggy Eby. We drew upon Peggy's extensive data set that tracked the seasonal migrations of this important Australian mammalian species - as a way of correspondingly understanding seasonal fluctuations. She described to us how 'nectar pulses' sweep across the Australian landscape - marked by the irregular flowering of the great Australian gum trees, and thus how these nectar-loving mammals follow in that wake. We therefore used both this powerful image, and her scientific data, as a mapping and orientation devices within the installation.



Fig1: *Temporal*, Bundaberg Regional Gallery. Image Lawrence English

To achieve this synthesis we designed custom interactive systems to computationally control the flow, pace and content of the work. We also drew upon a range of visual illusionary techniques, including the use of softly curved dish screens, experimental lighting techniques and simple robotic control systems. Multi channel, real-time spatial audio processes drew upon a rich array of sounds, including seasonal, nocturnal field recordings sourced in the Australian regions. Synthesised visual imagery drew upon detailed observations of changes within seasonal foliage & flowering phases. These approaches also sought to draw attention to the subtle transitions between the multiple seasons recognised by Australian indigenous cultures, suggesting much finer grained, relational changes beyond the rigid structures of the old European seasonal models. Sensor-based systems in the installation registered audiences' 'bodily disturbances' – and were also used to subtly alter the sound and image in real time, as a technique for furthering the immersive, embodied experiences of the work.

Through all of these approaches *Temporal* sought to amplify and shine light upon a myriad of mysterious lives lived in blackness, speaking to the availability of sensuous, deep engagement with the rich, irregular spectras of seasonal forms: yet also hinting at a far less comforting background, increasingly framed by anthropogenic climate change.



Fig2: Temporal, Bundaberg Regional Gallery. Image Lawrence English



Fig3: Temporal (detail), Bundaberg Regional Gallery. Image Lawrence English

This work completed a two year long project of dynamic mediated installations presented in Sydney (<http://embodiedmedia.com/homeartworks/night-rage>), Beijing (<http://embodiedmedia.com/homeartworks/light-of-extinction>), Cairns

(<http://embodiedmedia.com/homeartworks/dark-cartographies>) and Bundanon (<http://embodiedmedia.com/homeartworks/black-nectar>), each choreographed by environmental cycles and alluding to a new framework for making media art work that we named 'Seasonal' – seeking to draw attention to that which will disappear when biodiverse worlds have descended into an era of permanent darkness – an 'extinction of human experience'.

See Temporal video at <https://vimeo.com/117792188>



Fig4: Temporal (detail), Bundaberg Regional Gallery. Image Lawrence English



Fig5: Temporal (detail), Bundaberg Regional Gallery. Image Lawrence English

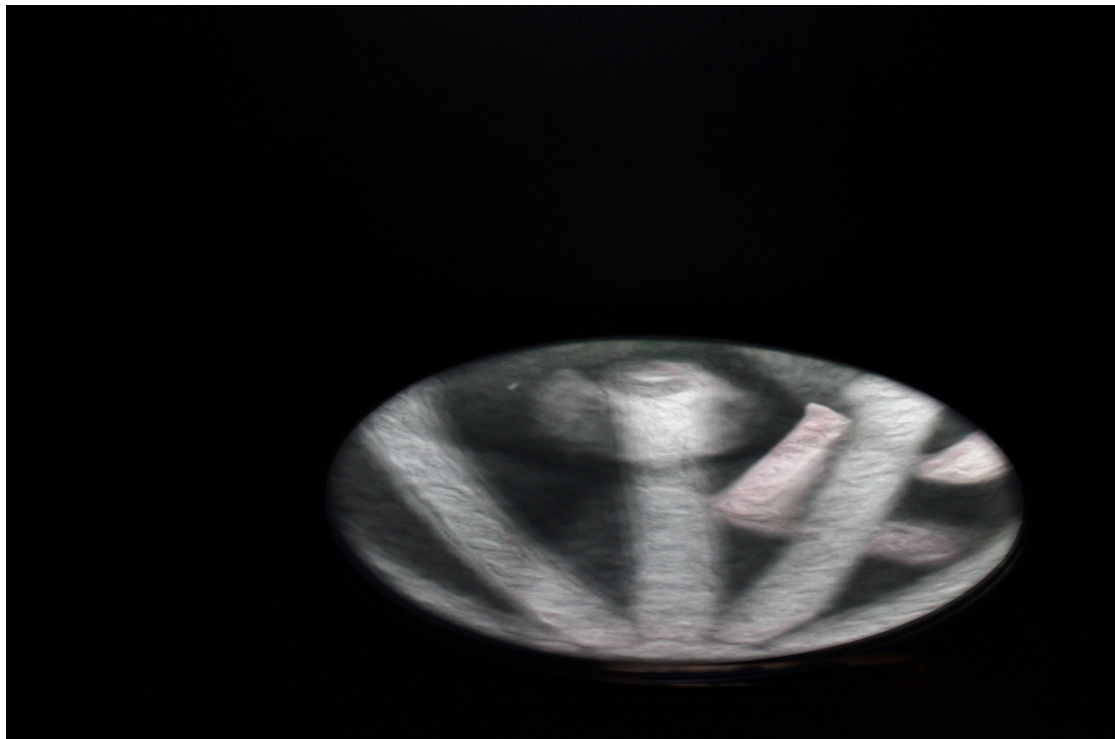


Fig6: Temporal (detail), Bundaberg Regional Gallery. Image Lawrence English

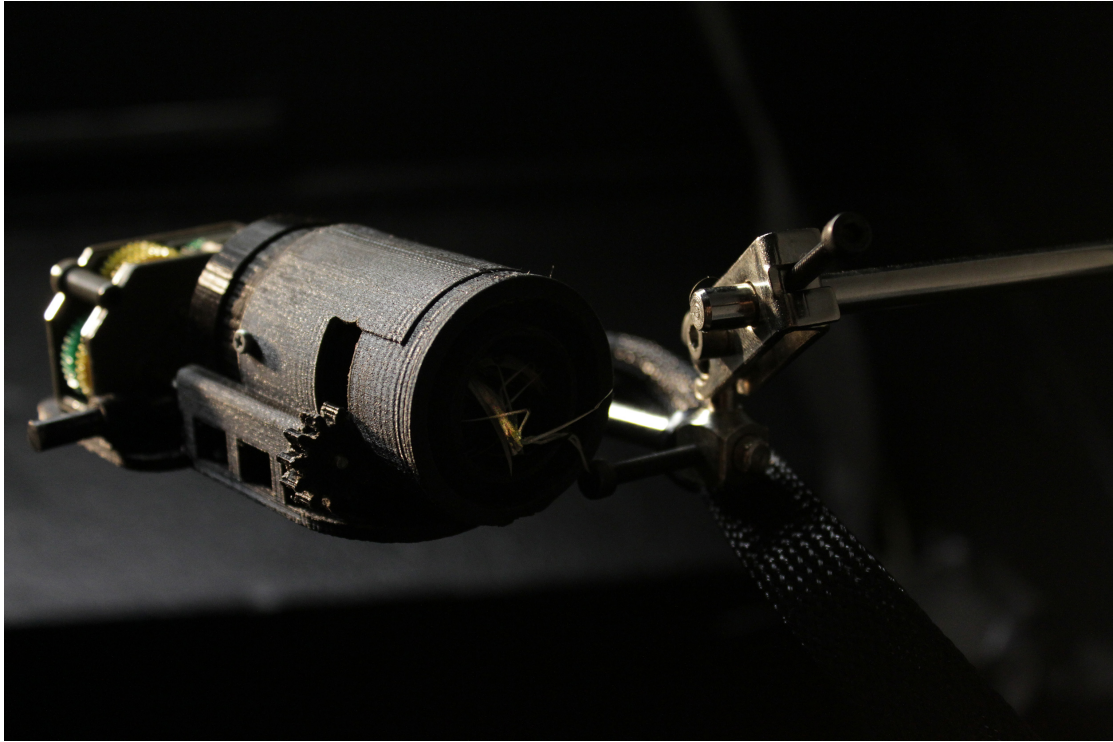


Fig7: Temporal (robotic light projector, detail), Bundaberg Regional Gallery. Image Lawrence English

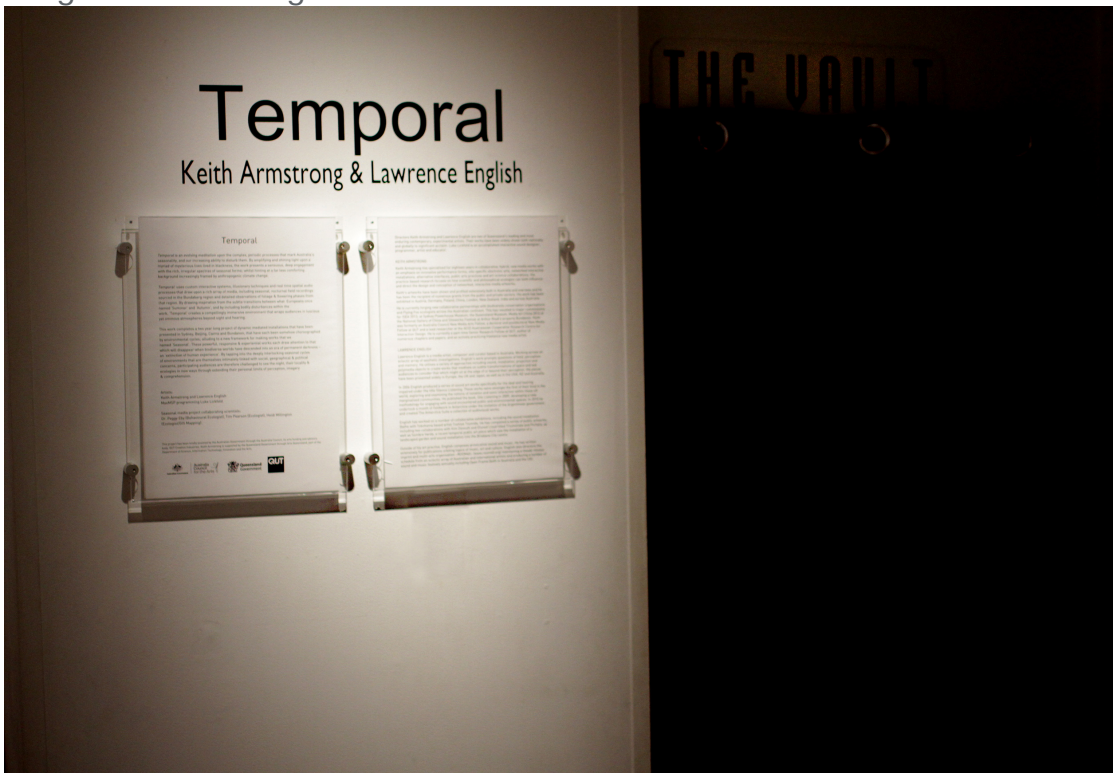


Fig8: Temporal (entrance detail), Bundaberg Regional Gallery. Image Lawrence English