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SIGHTLINES

FESTIVAL AND SYMPOSIUM |
JUNE 29-30 2023



Creative People,
Products and
Places (CP3)

aspera

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
TARNDANYA / ADELAIDE

Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Kurna Peoples and their Elders past and present, who are the First Nations' traditional owners of the land that is now home to the University of South Australia's City West campus in Adelaide. We are honoured to recognise our connection to the Kurna lands, and their history, culture and spirituality, and we strive to ensure that we operate in a manner which respects their Elders and ancestors. We also acknowledge the other First Nations of lands across Australia with which we conduct our business, their Elders, ancestors, cultures and heritage.

Welcome

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the fourth presentation of Sightlines Festival and Symposium.

It has now been nine years since the inaugural Sightlines event at RMIT in Melbourne. This first conference created an important venue for the screening and discussion of diverse and high-quality creative screen-based works produced in the higher education sector. In 2016 Sightlines expanded to include presentations of work from areas adjacent to screen production, such as screenwriting and digital or interactive productions, while the 2019 event saw the inclusion of works focusing on audio aspects of screen production.

In 2023, Sightlines moves to the new location of Adelaide, South Australia and runs alongside the annual conference of the Australian Screen Production, Education and Research Association (ASPERA). We look forward to the conversations that this configuration of events will bring. We gratefully acknowledge the support of UniSA's Creative People, Products and Places (CP3) Research Centre in 2023, as well as ASPERA's ongoing support, in mounting the event.

As with past events, the 2023 Sightlines program offers screenings of a diverse range of creative works, creative practice papers, and work in progress presentations from national and international presenters. The various sessions offer an opportunity to view and hear about new frameworks, methods, and approaches to work in our discipline. Our Gala Screening showcases three screen works that have been recently

produced in various contexts within the academy, fostering discussion on the future of screen-based creative research. In conjunction with ASPERA, we are pleased to welcome Adelaide-based producer, Lisa Scott, to reflect upon developments in screen production in an industry context.

We further expand the scope of Sightlines in 2023 by including a series of works and papers that explore the possibilities of virtual reality (VR) technologies. Advancements in this field are paralleled by ongoing developments regarding distribution platforms and methods of audience engagement, which shape our approaches to screen production. More broadly speaking, the four years since the last event have seen significant social and cultural shifts affecting screen production and related areas, which we look forward to reflecting upon throughout the event.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in bringing the 2023 event to fruition. Special thanks to members of the Organising Committee (Michael Bentham, Kim Munro and Saige Walton) and Kaya Blum for her dedicated work behind the scenes. Thanks also to the many peer reviewers of screen works. I would also like to acknowledge my predecessors at RMIT, Patrick Kelly and Leo Berkeley. It is an honour to take the reins in 2023 following your inspiring leadership and careful carriage of past events.

Thank you also for being part of the 2023 edition of Sightlines. We hope that you enjoy the program.

— *Kath Dooley, Sightlines Convener*

Schedule at a Glance

THURSDAY 29 JUNE

Opening Keynote

Date: Thursday 29 June
Venue: Flinders University City Campus
Time: 11:30am

Evening Gala

Date: Thursday 29 June
Venue: The Mercury Cinema
Time: 5:30pm Drinks & nibbles in the foyer
6:00pm Book launch in the foyer
7:00pm Welcome to Country & screenings in the cinema

Screenings & Presentations

Date: Thursday 29 June
Venue: The Mercury Cinema & The UniSA Hawke Building
Time: 1:30pm — 5:30pm

FRIDAY 30 JUNE

Screenings & Presentations

Date: Friday 30 June
Venue: The Mercury Cinema & The UniSA Hawke Building
Time: 9:00am — 5:45pm

Closing Drinks

Date: Friday 30 June
Venue: Light ADL
Time: 6:00pm

SATURDAY 1 JULY

Experience SA Daytrip (Optional)

Date: Saturday 1 July
Venue: McLaren Vale Wine Region + more
Time: 10:00am — 6:00pm



WIFI Access

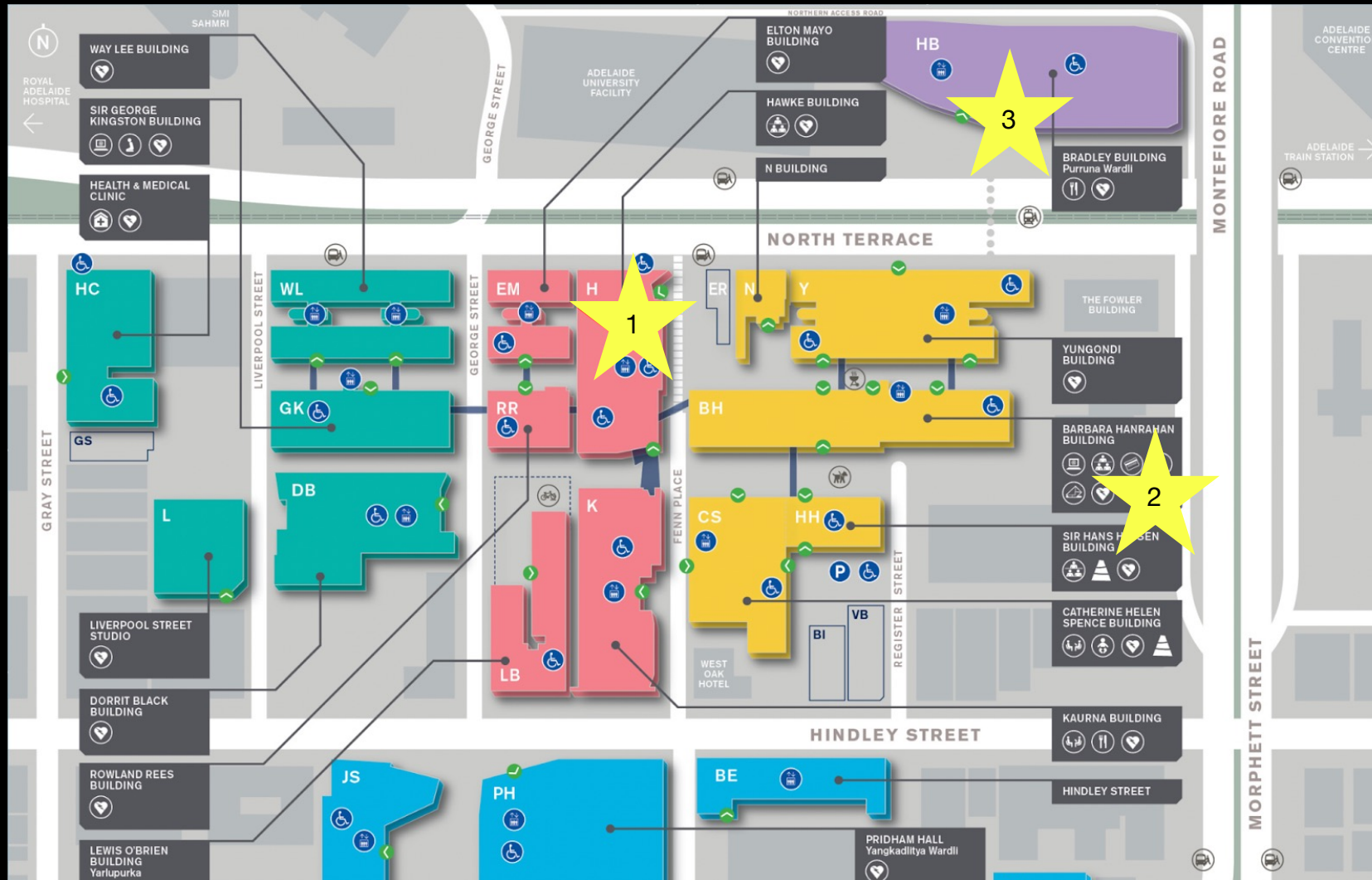
For instructions on how to connect to
UniSA's Guest Wireless Internet

[CLICK HERE](#)

Contact

kath.dooley@unisa.edu.au

UniSA City West Campus



- 1 UniSA Hawke Building
55 North Terrace, Adelaide 5000
- 2 Mercury Cinema
13 Morphet Street, Adelaide 5000
- 3 MOD
North Terrace, Adjacent Morphet Street, Adelaide 5000

Please note the Keynote venue:
Flinders University City Campus
182 Victoria Square, Adelaide 5000

Venue for closing drinks:
Light ADL
63 Light Square, Adelaide 5000

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Schedule

Thursday 29th



Screening



Paper / Panel

MERCURY CINEMA


HAWKE BUILDING – BRADLEY FORUM

HAWKE BUILDING – ROOM H6-12

11:30 am	Keynote: Lisa Scott 30 mins (Flinders University City Campus)		
12:10 pm	Q&A 20 mins		
12:30 pm	Lunch 30 mins		
1:00 pm	Travel to Mercury Cinema, Registration in foyer 30 mins		
1:30 pm	Welcome to UniSA, Aspera Sightlines Business & Aspera Research Subcommittee 40 mins		
2:10 pm	Screening: <i>Weedling</i> (Angie Black) 45 mins Chair: Kath Dooley	Screening: <i>Cafflogion Variations #3</i> (Dafydd Sills-Jones) 30 mins Chair: Saige Walton	Paper: Exegetical film in interdisciplinary research: Alchemical World-Making (Aaron Burton) 30 mins Chair: Anne Chesher
2:40 pm		Screening: <i>A High Wind Over Hasegawa</i> (Damian Gascoigne) 30 mins	Paper: Kirakira Hospital 2012 - 243 kms from Honiara (Michael Sergi) 30 mins
2:55 pm	Screening: <i>Almost the Night</i> (Simon Weaving) 25 mins		
3:10 pm			
3:20 pm	Afternoon Tea 20 mins		
3:40 pm	Screening: <i>White Noise</i> (Karen Nobes and Susan Kerrigan) 70 mins Chair: Rachel Wilson	Panel: Immersive nonfiction media and climate-resilient futures: affordances, exchanges and practice. (Presented in collaboration with IDOCS) 90 mins Chair: Kim Munro	Screening: <i>The Limits of Consent</i> (Michael Keerdo-Dawson) 90 mins Chair: Simon Weaving
4:00 pm			
4:40 pm	Screening: <i>Emerging Visions: Adventures in Australian Screen Production</i> (Craig Rossiter) 30 mins		
5:00 pm			
5:30 pm	Drinks and book launch in Mercury Foyer 90 mins		
7:00 pm	Gala screening: <i>Interview With A Sand Dune</i> (Catherine Gough Brady), <i>Bird Sounds</i> (Ross Adrian Williams), <i>Soft Skinned</i> (Nicky Tyndale-Biscoe) + Q&A 120 mins Chair: Michael Bentham		
7:30 pm			
9:00 pm			

Schedule

Friday 30th

 Paper / Panel

 Screening

 VR

MERCURY CINEMA

HAWKE BUILDING - BRADLEY FORUM

HAWKE BUILDING - ROOM H6-12

HAWKE - ROOM H6-09

9:30 am	Suzie Gibson in Conversation with filmmaker Jolyon Hoff and collaborator Muzafar Ali - on The Staging Post (2017) and Watandar, My Countryman (2022). 60 mins Chair: Suzie Gibson			VR works- introduction and viewing: Liam Somerville, Kath Dooley 60 mins
10:00 am				
10:30 am	Morning Tea 30 mins			
11:00 am	Screening: <i>Earthship Freo</i> (Michelle Johnston) 90 mins Chair: Kath Dooley	Paper: Disclosure (Michael Bentham) 30 mins Chair: Aaron Burton	Paper: The Enhanced Digital Pilot Screenplay (Marco Ianniello) 30 mins Chair: Saige Walton	
11:30 am		Screening: <i>Honcho Disko</i> (Patrick Kelly) 60 mins	Paper: Self-reflexive and participatory documentaries on TikTok (Kristina Chapman) 30 mins	
12:00 pm			Paper: Not a Euphemism (Stayci Taylor) 30 mins	
12:30 pm	Lunch 60 mins			VR in headsets 120 mins
1:30 pm	Screening: <i>True Blue</i> (Neeli Raag) (Swati Dandekar) 90 mins Chair: Marsha Berry	Panel: 'The video essay: extending scholarship through audio-visual methods' 90 mins Chair: Saige Walton	Paper: All Our Lesbians Are Dead: TV, tropes and trauma (Natalie Krikowa) 30 mins	
2:00 pm			Screening: <i>Queer Interruptions</i> (Evangeline Aguas) 30 mins	
2:20 pm			Presentation: A mani-pedi-anti-counter-FESTO (Angie Black, Patrick Kelly, Kim Munro, Stayci Taylor) 30 mins Chair: Catherine Gough Brady	
3:00 pm	Afternoon Tea 30 mins			
3:40 pm	Screening: <i>Record</i> (Joanna Callaghan) 90 mins Chair: Susan Kerrigan	Screening: <i>The Futurical Society</i> (Kim Munro) 40 mins Futures on Screen Chair: Stayci Taylor	Presentation: Development and production of Thin Ice VR (James Calvert) 30 mins Chair: Kath Dooley	
4:10 pm		Screening: <i>Set the Tone</i> (Shannon Owen) 30 mins	Presentation: Emotive silence and the soundscapes of an endangered world (Carlos Manrique Clavijo) 30 mins	
4:40 pm		Screening: <i>Shama</i> (Arezou Zalipour and James Nicholson) 30 mins	Presentation: AI Moments: the trouble with AI for screen production (Marsha Berry) 30 mins	
5:10 pm				
5:20 pm	Final reflections and thanks Chair: Kath Dooley			
5:50 pm	Drinks at Light ADL			

Gala Screening

7:00pm Thursday 29 June @ The Mercury Cinema

Join us for a screening of three short screen works produced in recent years followed by a filmmaker Q&A. We look forward to a discussion on the knowledge and understanding that screen productions can foster through their making and/or screening, considering impacts for a broad range of stakeholders.

The three films to be screened are:

Bird Sounds (2022, dir. Ross Williams)

Interview with a Sand Dune (2023, dir. Catherine Gough-Brady)

The Soft-Skinned (2021, dir. Nicky Tyndale-Biscoe)

This screening is preceded by a book launch with drinks and nibbles in the Mercury Cinema foyer.

The session will begin with a Welcome to Country at 7pm.



Bird Sounds (2022, dir. Ross Williams)

The Soft-Skinned (2021, dir. Nicky Tyndale-Biscoe)



Interview with a Sand Dune (2023, dir. Catherine Gough-Brady)

Book Launch: *Constructions of the Real* (2023)

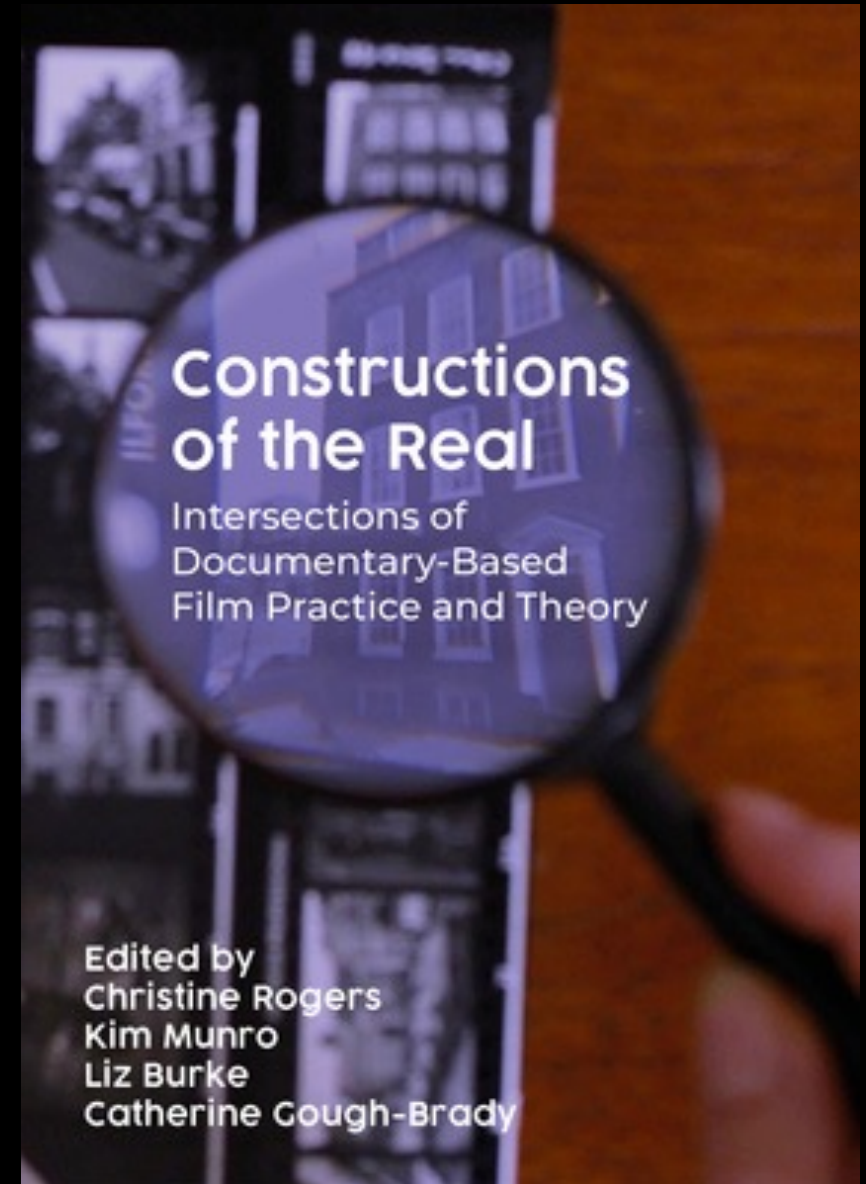
5.30pm Thursday 29 June @ The Mercury Cinema Foyer

To be launched by Adelaide Film Festival Head of Programming and Industry,
Gail Kovatseff.

Co-edited by Christine Rogers, Kim Munro (University of South Australia), Liz Burke (Swinburne University) and Catherine Gough-Brady (JMC Academy), *Constructions of the Real* features a wide range of writing from non-fiction and documentary filmmakers who undertake theoretically informed practice and think through making. These global filmmakers and writers straddle the divide between the academy and industry and they reflect on, interrogate and explicate their filmmaking practices in relationship to questions of form, content, and process.

The book is in four sections. The first is on intimate, first-person works where memory and identity are explored. The second features responses to and interventions in historical and dominant relationships to place. The third explores multi various forms of essay films. In the final section, filmmakers discuss the precarity of non-fiction filmmaking in its form and financial rewards. This book is anti-colonial, in that it offers diverse new voices and new practices promoting hybridity and experimentation and makes claims for knowledges that fall outside of traditional scholarship. This book presents the silenced and the marginalized. It engages with current debates about the role of creative scholarship and makes a claim for non-fiction filmmaking as a knowledge-making practice for revealing, critiquing, and interpreting the world.

Please join us for drinks and nibbles to celebrate the launch of this book! We will then head into the cinema for the gala screening.



Keynote

11.30am Thursday 29 June
@ Flinders University Victoria Square Campus

182 Victoria Square, Adelaide SA 5000



In 2023 our keynote address will be presented in collaboration with the annual ASPERA conference. We welcome Adelaide-based Producer, Lisa Scott, who will reflect on changes to the screen production industry and ramification for academics.

Lisa Scott is a multi-award winning producer of quality scripted drama through her company Highview Productions. Her recent productions include *A Sunburnt Christmas* for Stan and the series *The Tourist*, which premiered on Stan, BBC1 and HBO Max in early 2022 to critical acclaim, and was the most watched drama in the UK last year.



Presented in collaboration
with ASPERA

Panel:

Immersive nonfiction media and climate-resilient futures: affordances, exchanges and practice.

3.30pm Thursday 29 June @ Bradley Forum

This panel will address how immersive and emerging nonfiction media forms might enable new conceptions of climate-resilient futures. The affordances of these media forms are offered as modes of interrogating and decentering the human gaze, and their potentials for offering novel forms of perspective are considered. Papers address more-than-human, temporal and locational scales, and share an interest in the potential of multi-sensory media to open immersants to new ways of thinking and being. A case study of the award-winning generative durational work, *Gondwana VR* (2022, Australia), by one its creators offers a practice-based exploration of these themes.

PANELISTS

Ben Andrews

Mandy Rose

Julia Scott-Stevenson



Presented in collaboration
with i-Docs

Panel:

*Jolyon Hoff's egalitarian cinema: Suzie Gibson in Conversation with filmmaker Jolyon Hoff and collaborator Muzafar Ali on *The Staging Post* (2017) and *Watandar, My Countryman* (2022).*

9.30am Friday 30 June @ Bradley Forum

As a storytelling device cinema has the capacity to provide unique insights into the lives of others. Jolyon Hoff's *The Staging Post* (2017) and, more recently, *Watandar, My Countryman* (2022) succeed in foregrounding the experiences of asylum seekers and immigrants — people who are too often neglected or misunderstood by the popular media and wider society. In both films Afghanistan-born Muzafar Ali operates as the lead protagonist and narrator who mediates our vision of the material, blurring the boundaries between director, story and audience. Both films could be described as egalitarian forms of cinema in that the subject matter is handled in a manner that is culturally aware and politically sensitive. This is particularly important when representing

disenfranchised and vulnerable members of society, which often includes refugees and those from non-English speaking backgrounds: giving such people voice is an inherently ethical act. What further unites *The Staging Post* and *Watandar, My Countryman* are their insightful meditations upon the themes of identity and belonging that oscillate around those immigrants who are stateless and isolated. In conversation with filmmaker Jolyon Hoff and his collaborator Muzafar Ali my presentation will consider the politics of cross-cultural filmmaking, the role of voice and perspective in filmmaking, the idea of the 'colonial gaze' and, finally, how Hoff's disarming cinematic style disrupts the conventional hierarchy between director and subject.

PANELISTS

Muzafar Ali

Suzie Gibson

Jolyon Hoff

Panel:

The video essay: extending scholarship through audio-visual methods

1.30pm Friday 30 June @ Bradley Forum

Through a variety of examples, this panel and presentation of work by screen scholars from Australia and New Zealand explores the idea of 'extension' in relation to the video essay process and form. For some panellists, video essays have emerged from written scholarship and serve to extend their ideas through a different approach to thinking about and with the media texts. We discuss in what ways – and through what means – video essay production works to extend ideas that were previously developed through traditional research and writing, taking research findings in further and fresh directions. For other panellists, ideas originate in the video

essay process itself. As opposed to the video essay form facilitating an extension of existing written scholarship, the spark of ideas is generated foremost in audio-visual methods. In sharing work and experiential perspectives, the panellists explore: how audio-visual methods can be used to analyse the sparsest of signs and gestures in eloquent and simple ways; the similarities and differences, cross-over and divergence between audio-visual and written research methods; current thinking on how scholarship can be (and is being) extended by video essays.

PANELISTS

Pansy Duncan
Catherine Fowler
Claire Henry
Missy Molloy
Lachlan Salt
Arezou Zalipou

Screen work
research statements &
presentation abstracts

Listed alphabetically by surname



Evangeline Aguas

Queer Interruptions (2021, screen work)



Biography

Dr Evangeline Aguas (she/her) is a media scholar at the University of Technology Sydney, Australia. With a background in professional film and television production, her interdisciplinary research aims to combine the fields of queer theory, digital media, and fan studies with creative practice. She has a particular interest in ethnographic studies of queer fans and practices, and how research can be further disseminated through online digital mediums.

Queer Interruptions is an online documentary produced as part of my PhD research on fandom and queer time. With increasing media attention on the history of queer female deaths onscreen through the “Bury Your Gays” trope, this research explores the temporal dimensions of this dark screen history. Drawing on queer theory, the work examines the multitemporal experiences of queer female and genderqueer fans and how they inhabit queer time: how they deviate from heteronormative life timelines and experience a sense of delay in the present; how they exhibit an anachronistic turn backward to linger in the pain of queer history; and how their digital archive practices express the contradictions and ambivalences of non-linear time. I argue that these experiences of temporal dislocation uncover the seemingly innate and pervasive nature of heteronormative time and how it persists in our liberatory present.

As a form of alternative scholarship, the documentary seeks to address current methodological trends in queer theory research. Kath Browne and Catherine Nash (2010) describe how queer theory’s reliance on textualism rather than ethnography has resulted in a field detached from the lived experiences of its subjects. Responding to these methodological tensions, *Queer Interruptions* grounds abstract theory through ethnographic fieldwork and an affective method of presentation: documentary video presenting the fans in their own voices, in their own bodies, and in their own words. As an online documentary, the video content and website design capture the intangible, obscure, and inexplicable dimensions of queer fan experience, demonstrating how abstract queer temporalities take material form in complex and contradictory ways.

Queer Interruptions was also a finalist in the Best Tertiary Documentary and Best Screen Production Research Moving Image Work categories at the 2022 ATOM Awards.

Muzafar Ali, Suzie Gibson & Jolyon Hoff

Suzie Gibson in Conversation with filmmaker Jolyon Hoff and collaborator Muzafar Ali: *The Staging Post* (2017) and *Watandar, My Countryman* (2022).

Biographies

Muzafar Ali is a Hazara artist from Afghanistan who grew up in Pakistan as a refugee. He worked with the United Nations disarmament program and is the first Afghan photographer to be exhibited by the United Nations in Afghanistan. He has held solo and joint exhibitions in the Republic of Korea, USA, UK, Canada, the Netherlands, and Australia. He is currently studying a BA at the University of South Australia.

Dr Suzie Gibson is Senior Lecturer in English Literature, School of Social Work and Arts, Charles Sturt University. Her research addresses traditional and innovative forms of literature, film, and philosophy. She is a contributor to the film journals and has twice judged the Australian Teachers of Media ATOM awards that involves assessing experimental screen productions including feature films and shorts.

Jolyon Hoff is an Australian filmmaker who has worked in Nigeria, Indonesia, Nepal, and Washington DC. His feature documentary, *The Staging Post*, was Highly Commended by the Australian Director's Guild and is one of the best performing documentaries screened in Australia across 2017 and 2018. Previous films include *Searching for Michael Peterson* that is human-focussed and compelling. Jolyon is inspired by important stories that bring communities together.

As a storytelling device cinema has the capacity to provide unique insights into the lives of others. Jolyon Hoff's *The Staging Post* (2017) and, more recently, *Watandar, My Countryman* (2022) succeed in foregrounding the experiences of asylum seekers and immigrants — people who are too often neglected or misunderstood by the popular media and wider society. In both films Afghanistan born Muzafar Ali operates as the lead protagonist and narrator who mediates our vision of the material, blurring the boundaries between director, story and audience. Both films could be described as egalitarian forms of cinema in that the subject matter is handled in a manner that is culturally aware and politically sensitive. This is particularly important when representing disenfranchised and vulnerable members of society, which often includes refugees and those from non-English speaking backgrounds: giving such people voice is an inherently ethical act. What further unites *The Staging Post* and *Watandar, My Countryman* are their insightful meditations upon the themes of identity and belonging that oscillate around those immigrants who are stateless and isolated. In conversation with filmmaker Jolyon Hoff and his collaborator Muzafar Ali my presentation will consider the politics of cross-cultural filmmaking, the role of voice and perspective in filmmaking, the idea of the 'colonial gaze' and, finally, how Hoff's disarming cinematic style disrupts the conventional hierarchy between director and subject.

Ben Andrews

Immersive nonfiction media and climate-resilient futures: affordances, exchanges and practice (presentation)

Biography

Ben Andrews is a director working in immersive mixed/extended realities (XR). Based in Linton/Wathaurong Country (Australia), and working with producer Emma Roberts, his work integrates VR within bespoke multi-sensory environments and performance-driven installations to create collective experiences ranging from the transcendent to the ecstatic. His projects have been exhibited at Sundance New Frontier, SXSW, CPH:DOX, Sheffield Doc/Fest and MIFF. He is undertaking a practice-led PhD at the University of Melbourne, exploring the emergent framework of sensory experience in virtual immersion.

Gondwana VR is a 24-hour, durational and generative experience, presented at multiple festivals including Sundance, SXSW, Sheffield DocFest and CPH:DOX.

Andrews will address the following:

- Generative durational storytelling — communicating the narrative of a changing ecosystem through modular temporal design
- Creating place/metaverse — how to build a virtual rainforest as a place of being rather than an inert space, and how designing a place to visit and return to has informed our exhibition /installation methodology where all audiences are co-present
- Collaborative process — working with Kuku Yalanji elders, scientists, community members to build an understanding of an ancient and ecologically significant rainforest
- Designing for hope — how audience participation shapes the future of Gondwana, and how each time Gondwana runs the outcome is different and open to change
- A different kind of audience experience - visitors to Gondwana do not begin with mastery over their universe, but rather must spend time to watch and learn how the ecosystem works to be able to uncover their place within it (including the hidden interactive gesture), and how this was inspired by conversations with Kuku Yalanji elders.



The ASPERA Research Sub-Committee

A Report on Progress Since Sightlines 2019
(presentation)

In this presentation, members of the ASPERA Research Sub-Committee will discuss projects, outcomes and outputs that have been conducted since the last Sightlines event in 2019. These include issues of the *Sightlines Journal*; a report on diversity in film schools and a related journal special issue; workshops at past ASPERA conferences and other activities. The RSC has continued to be very busy since 2019, and so this panel will bring delegates up to speed about developments that are continuing to assist filmmaking researchers to produce, capture and gain recognition for their work. Sightlines 2023 delegates will also be invited to offer ideas and feedback that might help the RSC plan its activities over the coming years.

The current ASPERA Research Sub-Committee are: Pieter Aquilla (AFTRS), Kath Dooley (Chair, UniSA), Phoebe Hart (QUT), Margaret McHugh (UTS), Marsha Berry (RMIT) and James Verdon (Swinburne University).



Michael Bentham

Screenwriting as 'Strategy': towards a working definition of narrative fiction filmmaking methodology (presentation)

Biography

Michael's work as a writer/director spans feature films, documentary and shorts. His recent feature film, *Disclosure* (2020), was nominated for an Australian Academy Award (best indie film), Australian Directors' Guild Award (best direction), won the ATOM (best feature film) Award, and is currently streaming on Stan. Michael's research activities at the University of South Australia are exploring the articulation and application of moving image narratives as methodology.

Using the recent Australian-UK feature film *Disclosure* (2020) as a case study, writer/director Michael Bentham will analyse the script-to-screen process of a key third act scene to demonstrate the fluidity of the notion of scripting in the digital era. The merging and augmentation of the traditional (Hollywood) screenplay format with mood boards, sound design, and annotated photo storyboards illustrate what Kathryn Millard refers to as 'cinematic scripting'. Crucially, cinematic scripting is not simply a delineated written text for the finished movie, but part of a collaborative filmmaking process of fluidity and flux, "an open text that sketches out possibilities". In this paper Bentham draws on non-representational theory to argue that cinematic scripting can be thought of as one of a series of creative *strategies* that filmmakers use in the creation of a 'filmic utterance'. The notion of screenplay as strategy builds on recent scholarly work that aims to articulate screenwriting (and screen production) **as** research. To this end the paper will offer a working definition of narrative fiction filmmaking as methodology, in which scripting and mise-en-scène operate as core strategies in generating new knowledge.

Marsha Berry

AI Moments: The trouble with AI for screen production (presentation)

Biography

Marsha Berry is an Associate Professor in the School of Media and Communication at RMIT University. She is an artist and ethnographer and author of *Creating with Mobile Media* (2017), Palgrave MacMillan, and co-editor of three volumes on mobile media and screen production. With over 50 articles and book chapters, she has published her research extensively in prestigious international journals and edited collections.

We are in a moment where the use of artificial intelligence (AI) systems has become pervasive and increasingly, is becoming a matter of community concern.

AI Moments: A video essay (2023) is a provocation and a response to some of these concerns. The research questions I address in my video essay and paper are:

What does it mean to involve AI in creative practice research?
And what does the use of AI mean for ethics and integrity?

Recently there was a controversy when an American artist used Midjourney - Drew Hartwell of the *Washington Post*, wrote an article about the controversy surrounding Jason Allen's work, "Théâtre D'opéra Spatial" which won Colorado State Fair's fine arts competition in the digitally manipulated photography category in September 2022. The image had been generated by the AI Midjourney in response to Allen's text input.

I turn to the work of Donna Haraway for inspiration and thought strategies to frame my exploration of text and image generators and how these may be used in creative practices. When speaking of trouble, Haraway refers to the origin of the word: "It derives from a thirteenth-century French verb meaning "to stir up," "to make cloudy," "to disturb."'" (Haraway 2016: 1). The intersections between art and AI algorithms are not straightforward and I seek to muddy them further in order to better understand and address the practical implications of AI for creative practices. I propose that rather than walking away from the trouble that AI poses, as creative practitioners, we should engage with it.

AI Moments curates AI generated speculative fabulations to illustrate the kinds of forms, hybrids and oddkins that may grow in screen spaces when we collaborate with an AI image generator and describes the process of working with Midjourney.

Haraway D (2016) *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Angie Black

Weedling (2023, screen work)



Biography

Dr Angie Black is a Senior Lecturer in Film & Television at VCA, University of Melbourne. They are an award-winning director who specialises in filmmaking as practice-led research. Black's research examines approaches to filmmaking, screenwriting and performance practices, with a focus on gender, sexuality and cultural diversity on screen.

Weedling is an 18-minute short narrative film investigating themes of male perpetrated violence against women and children, queer sexuality, gender nonconformity and biophilia. 'Domestic abuse and violence cut a deep wound into our society. It has been experienced by one in four Australian women. From a survey of 5000 Australian children 23% of them have witnessed physical violence against their mother or stepmother' (Hill 2019:165). *Weedling* was produced in response to the question 'what is it to bring stories of violence to the screen?' The project's aim focused on how, as a feminist filmmaker, can we make films about domestic violence without falling into gendered cinema tropes of showing a woman in fear.

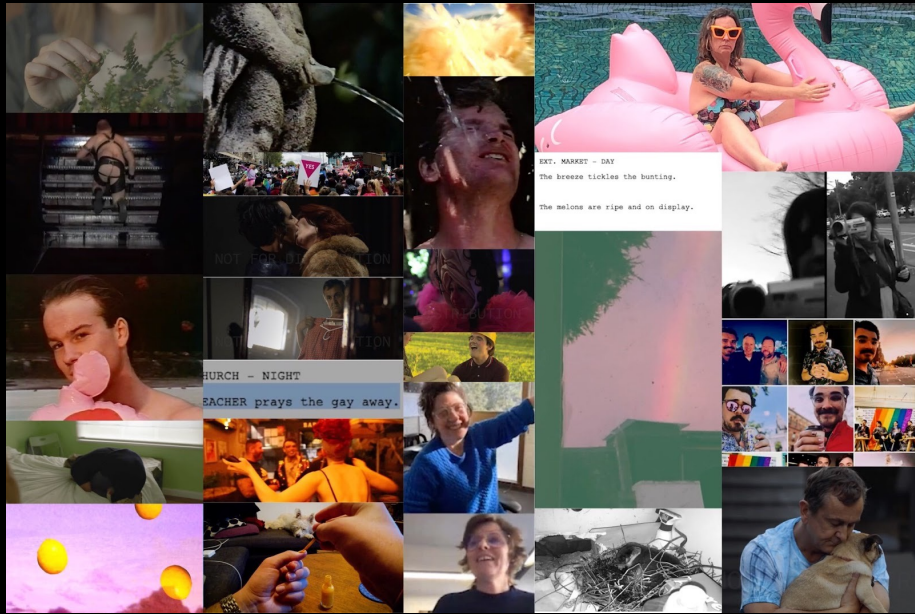
The film is told through the perspective of Alix, a gender non-conforming teenager who at 14 years is still considered a child but old enough to take agency over their actions. For queer people, the threat of domestic violence is even higher. '25 percent of trans and gender diverse young people aged between 14 and 25 years experienced verbal or physical abuse at home.' (Smith et al 2014: 60). The work draws from Munoz theories of queer utopias and temporalities and 'the disruption of binarized logic' (Munoz 2009:49). Queers are often re-parented in essence by the queer community, finding solace in one another, freedom to be in ways not always possible with biological families. Alix's journey is not only about overcoming domestic abuse and attempting to get their mother to see the level of abuse but also learning to take control over their own destiny.

The film was produced with an alternative methodology to filmmaking practice including improvisation and phenomenology, conforming to COVID restrictions and aiming for gender diversity. It was filmed over a protracted time utilising responses to the initial research.

Hill, J. (2019) *See What You Made Me Do: Power, Control and Domestic Abuse*, Black Inc. Melbourne. P. 165

Munoz, J. (2009) *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: New York University Press. P.49.

Smith, E., Jones, T., Ward, R., Dixon, J., Mitchell, A., & Hillier, L., (2014) From blues to rainbows: The mental health and well-being of gender diverse and transgender young people in Australia, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, University of New England, BeyondBlue, Melbourne. P.60



Angie Black, Patrick Kelly, Kim Munro, Stayci Taylor

A mani-pedi-anti-counter-FESTO for a queer screen production practice (presentation)

A mani-pedi-anti-counter-FESTO for a queer screen production practice is a 14-min film resulting from a collaboration between four practitioner-researchers in which we examine our own queer screen storytelling. Through our individual practices (screenwriting, mobile media, and documentary and narrative filmmaking) we collaborated on a 14-point manifesto, which highlights how queerness can be understood in screen production beyond just examples of on-screen representation. The film is an assemblage that sits at the nexus of practice-led research and queer theory, drawing on the work of Pema Duddul (formerly Dallas Baker) who suggests “a queered practice-led research can be seen to reframe creative practice and critical research as an ethical intervention into subject information and knowledge production” (2011). We might call it an essay film or, from *Berlant* (2022), an essay film – using strings of association to loosen the structures we take for granted. The 14-minute audiovisual essay, a collection of archives, previously produced screen works, and made-for-purpose material, responds directly to our FESTO as a tool of collaboration. We include footage of our online collaborative methodology in order to make ‘manifest’ the aims for queer practice that embrace ‘kinship making’ (#6) and ‘the richness of embarrassment’ (#9). By ‘embracing the possibility of failure’ (#1), we four practitioner-academics borrow Ahmed’s (2010) utopian premise to propose a (mani-pedi-anti-counter-) FESTO for our hopes of what queer screen production is/could/should be. The collaboration tests the possibilities for disruptive queer methods that ‘might not make the alternative possible, but aims to make impossible the belief that there is no alternative’ (Ahmed 2010). Part performance, part screening, part quaterlogue, we weave together our four practices which celebrate and assemble queer methodologies; ultimately asking what might a screen practice that challenges aspirational heteronormative storytelling do in the world.

Biographies on next page.

Angie Black, Patrick Kelly, Kim Munro, Stayci Taylor

A mani-pedi-anti-counter-FESTO for a queer screen production practice (presentation)

Biographies

Angie Black is a senior lecturer at VCA, University of Melbourne. They are an award-winning director who specialises in filmmaking as practice-led research. Their debut feature film, *The Five Provocations* (2018), along with an extensive body of short films, explore innovative approaches to filmmaking and actively promote on screen diversity.

Patrick Kelly is a senior lecturer at RMIT. He is a filmmaker, media producer and artist, currently working on a documentary film project about Honcho Disko, an inclusive queer performance night, and exploring notions of identity, belonging and community in and around queer documentary film practice.

Kim Munro is a lecturer at University of South Australia and a documentary researcher and practitioner at the intersection of immersive and interactive technology and social and environmental issues. Kim was the conference programmer for the 2020 and 2021 Australian International Documentary Conferences (AIDC), Australia's premiere event for nonfiction content.

Stayci Taylor is a senior lecturer at RMIT. She brings to her research an ongoing practice in screenwriting, script editing and performance. She is the co-editor of two books on script development, and one on creative writing methods. Publications include works in *TEXT*, *New Writing* and *the Journal of Screenwriting*.

Aaron Burton

Exegetical film in interdisciplinary research:
Alchemical World-Making (presentation)

Biography

Dr Aaron Burton is a Communications and Media lecturer at University of Wollongong. Burton uses creative practice-based research methods including visual ethnography, documentary, and scholarly publication to explore experiential storytelling. His doctoral research and corresponding documentary film titled *Provenance in Personal Documentary: My Mother's Village* (2014) traverse scholarly work in documentary film, art history, cultural studies, and ethnography. His research extends to collaborative filmmaking within the academy, such as *Sunset Ethnography* (2014) with professors Stephen Muecke and Michael Taussig, and ongoing collaborations with environmental scientist Madeline Goddard, such as *Between the Tides* (2020).

The relationship between creative practice and exegetical writing has been the site of extensive discussion and experimentation. The combination of a major creative work and a written exegesis is the standard requirement for creative arts PhDs. Beyond the assessable dimensions of doctoral programs, the exegetical form arguably offers a unique entanglement of creative production, critical reflection, evaluation, and expression. This paper explores the affordances and limitations of a moving-image exegesis by way of an applied example, *Alchemical World-Making*, and a discussion on how exegetical filmmaking might be distinct from established forms such as essay-film, behind-the-scenes, and biographical documentaries. The discussion adopts Barbara Bolt's (2007) arguments on the complimentary rather than explanatory role of the exegesis and extends concepts of 'handlability' and 'material thinking' to filmmaking.

Alchemical World-Making contributes an exegesis in the form of a visual ethnography to a multi-year interdisciplinary research collaboration, Next Generation Sustainable Crafting (NFSG). The broader research collaboration between visual artists, a material scientist, a paleoclimatologist, and filmmaker, provoked a search for common ground across divergent epistemologies and practices. The project discovered a material focus to be a productive lens for art-science research. The filmmaking contribution proposed to observe, evaluate, and share key themes from the research project. The materiality of the moving-image – its composition, temporality, juxtapositions, illumination, and so on – arguably provides a complimentary discursive form to the iterative cycles of cause and response in collaborative practice-based research.

Joanna Callaghan

Record (2021, screen work)



Biography

Joanna Callaghan is an artist filmmaker based in the UK. She has worked in broadcast television and radio, and independent feature film production in London and Paris. Her films explore philosophical ideas and include '*Record*' (2021) and '*Love in the Post: From Plato to Derrida*' (2014), a hybrid feature based on a book by Jacques Derrida. In 2007 she established Heraclitus Pictures dedicated to supporting artist films and exhibitions. Callaghan is Professor of Filmmaking at the University of Sussex, UK.

Record is a autobiographical essay film about identity and history. Framed by a road trip through Australia, it weaves together a story of personal and colonial history, exploring how the self is shaped by life experiences and how remembering is a process of creation. It draws on over 20 years of archive material from home videos to fiction films, photography, dance film, video and sound art. It also includes extracts from Robert Hughes' *The Fatal Shore* (1986), a chronicle of Australia's colonisation.

There are many ways to read a film – and these can be complicated and messy when you are the film's author. Derrida has shown us that reading is a complex, creative act, one that can reveal the hidden while simultaneously covering over the possible. Reading and re-reading is an act which can disclose and challenge the appearance of self-evidence within a text, or in this case in a film. This notion is drawn from Heidegger's contestation that history is built from a series of layers and discourses which have hardened and now appear as if they are facts. For Heidegger, it is through phenomenology that we can deconstruct such 'facts'. In making a film, we engage a phenomenological transformation of what we might call the 'facts' of this filmmaking – the materials, processes and subjects of our films. In doing so we are, in a Heideggerian sense, being in a world, one which has possibilities unique and only to itself. Filmmaking is always an immersion into a simultaneously projected world (*projection* = story arc/meaning making) and one in which we find ourselves (*thrownness* = material & personal limitations). There is a certain hiddenness inherent to filmmaking in spite of intentionality and the gesture on the part of the filmmaker towards a transcendental consciousness, capable of reflecting upon what we do and who we are.

James Calvert

Development and production of *Thin Ice VR* and the research that supports it (presentation)

Biography

James is an educator, researcher and internationally recognised VR director, film maker and game designer. With over 20 years' experience creating engaging content for all screen types, James has an enduring passion for immersive storytelling. James is currently a senior lecturer and research fellow focused on digital media, immersive media and video games at Torrens University Australia.

The impact of climate change in the Antarctic is clearly visible for those fortunate enough to travel to the remote and inhospitable region. However, educating students and the public via screens the full extent of the impacts of climate change on the polar ice, poses a difficult problem. The immense scale of loss is not easily comprehended. Virtual Reality (VR) affords audiences a level of immersion and with it a first-person perspective, not previously obtainable via traditional screen technology.

The VR experience *Thin Ice VR*, immerses audiences in another time and place, exposing the impacts of climate change in the Antarctic over the last century. Featuring the engaging and affecting story of Sir Ernest Shackleton and his ill-fated Imperial Trans Antarctic Expedition of 1914-1916, audiences walk directly in the footsteps of Shackleton and see the extent of ice loss with their own eyes. This is achieved through the innovative use of 360° capture of sub-Antarctic locations, combined with actors, digitally constructed 3D environments and photogrammetry, creating realistic and authentic virtual environments where the narrative unfolds. The significance of this production is that it affords a wide-ranging audience the opportunity to be immersed in a narrative centred experience that educates and offers a first-hand insight on the devastating effects of climate change.

This presentation examines the research supporting the development of *Thin Ice VR*, exploring the educational benefits of narrative VR for students. A key feature of the research is that it was conducted in a multi-disciplinary manner, employing both mixed methods research and the production of the creative artefact. The two methods support each other and the iterative process of designing, developing, user testing, data gathering, and analysis means the research and creative output has real-world impact.

www.thinicevr.com

Kristina Chapman

Self-reflexive and participatory documentaries on TikTok – how does the platform’s unique features expand these documentary conventions?
(presentation)

Biography

Kristina Chapman has recently completed her Masters research on interactive storytelling on TikTok at SAE Institute. Her Masters focused on fiction storytelling, looking at how participatory culture has evolved throughout the decade to become what it is on TikTok. Throughout her research Kristina began to understand how traditional story structures continue on TikTok, but in an amplified state. Her interests have started to divulge into non-fiction storytelling and whether a participatory audience could work effectively in the documentary landscape.

Online media platforms offer audiences innovative ways to contribute to content and filmmaking. A current predominant platform, TikTok, encourages audiences to engage with videos through comments, likes, shares, and creative video responses. Some video creators purposely inspire their audiences to participate, using audience input as suggestions for future content. What do documentary modes, such as participatory and self-reflexive, look like on a platform such as TikTok? Can a participatory episodic documentary include the audiences in real time, and not simply those in the community invited into the filmmaking process? What does “collaborative and inclusive” production look like if the distribution platform also invites audiences to engage? How is a documentary made specifically for TikTok, and the audience behaviours akin to TikTok, different to the user experience of past web documentaries? While TikTok isn’t unique in what it offers regarding audience engagement, the platform’s low barrier of participation has allowed more viewers to creatively respond to video content with their own video creations. Many fiction stories have been created using this method, with the hashtags #alternaterealitygame and #alternativerealitygame having an accumulated 12.9 million views (as of December 2022). Online self-reflexive filmmaking isn’t unique to TikTok either, with other platforms allowing audience members to effectively create their own personalised documentaries. These can either be following traditional filmmaking modes or appear in the form of a vlog. What can TikTok offer for documentary filmmakers that differs or builds upon these already established conventions? This presentation on a creative project looks at exploring documentary filmmaking on TikTok, ensuring audience behaviour and use is clearly understood and encouraged in the creation of the project. The referenced documentary follows the filmmaker’s experiences of growing up as an Australian, losing touch of her mother’s Filipino culture, and follows the filmmaker as she learns about her heritage.

Swati Dandekar

True Blue (Neeli Raag) (2018, screen work)



Biography

Swati Dandekar is a filmmaker and academic based at the Srishti Manipal Institute in Bangalore, India, with a special interest in creating visual narratives of the continuous but invisible process of change. Her past work is a series of essay films that explore the relationship between place, people, resources and how these are governed.

As a founder trustee of Vikalp Bengaluru, she has been screening documentary films and curating festivals in Bangalore city for over fifteen years.

India has a long and continuous history of artisanal practices that hand crafted objects for self-use and for trade. While there appears to be a rising demand for hand crafted objects among the urban elite, the artisans engaged in making them struggle to survive and to find meaning in what they do. Over the years many crafts practices have disappeared or are left with one or two practitioners. (*India's Artisans: A Status Report*, 1995)

As a filmmaker, how do I respond to this slow but continuous process of erasure? What role can the documentary film play in keeping a record of the practices and the lived experience of the artisans? As a film educator how do I nurture in my students the ability to respond to a context and use film-making as a form of research?

In *True Blue*, I chose to look at the practice of natural indigo dyeing to explore questions around crafts practice as embodied knowledge, and filmmaking as an embodied practice.

Dyeing is a practice that is located in the senses – smell, touch, taste. In the making of the film, I drew inspiration from the embodied nature of this practice to inspire my cinematic choices, my image-making and my storytelling. The attempt was to create an experiential piece that not only uses insights from research done prior to filming, but creates insights through the process of filming – looking, framing, recording sounds, assembling my images and sounds.

The purpose was also to make apparent my sensorial response to what I was seeing and filming. In this the film addresses the role of the sensorial in filmmaking, how the language of cinema can engage with the idea of embodiment in crafts practice and how the image itself is an expression of insights. (MacDougall, 2006, p. 54-60)

In India, the film has generated discussions around the sustainability, relevance, and economics of crafts production. In the international festival space and in academic institutions, viewers have responded most strongly to the ideas of embodied practice, of the cultural situatedness of indigo dyeing, and the ethnographic aspects of the film.

Kath Dooley

Inside Earthship Freo (2020, virtual reality screen work)



Biography

Associate Professor Kath Dooley is a filmmaker and academic based at the University of South Australia. Her work as writer/director has screened at events such as the Edinburgh International Film Festival and FIVARS, Toronto. Kath is author of *Cinematic Virtual Reality- A Critical Study of 21st Century Approaches and Practices* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021) and co-editor of *The Palgrave Handbook of Screen Production* (2019). Her research interests include screen production methodology for traditional and immersive media, screenwriting, women's screen practice, and diversity in the screen industries.

Since around 2015, a new wave of virtual reality experiences have appeared at film festivals and other venues around the world, fostered by consumer grade VR technologies such as viewing goggles and omnidirectional cameras. As a result, creators have explored the affordances of VR as a storytelling medium in industrial and academic contexts. *Inside Earthship Freo* is a 360-degree stereoscopic documentary experience that takes you into the houses that comprised an off-the-grid community of squatters and activists that existed in Fremantle, Western Australia, from 2015-2019. The work exposes the viewer to the exceptional artworks that adorned the walls of Earthship Freo, and introduces the considered philosophies of the residents, showing their approach to living a communal lifestyle without running water or power.

The work creates new knowledge on the possibilities for documentary in the spatialized 360-degree VR format. Considering the experience and positioning of the VR viewer, the making of the project involved experimentation with direct address to camera and play with concepts such as proximity and embodiment. The challenges associated with directing participants when filming in 360-degree space were also explored. As a creative practice artefact, it contributes to an emerging area of scholarship on cinematic virtual reality (CVR).

The houses captured in the film were destroyed by the Western Australian Department of Main Roads in September 2019, so this 360-degree experience stands as an important record of cultural heritage. The project was a finalist in the 2020 Western Australia Screen Awards (a part of the Revelation International Film Festival) and the 2021 Women in Film & Television (WIFT) 'V-FEST' (Best New Media).

Pansy Duncan, Claire Henry, & Missy Molloy

Art Cinema's Suicidal Posthuman Women
(presentation)

Biographies

Missy Molloy, Pansy Duncan and Claire Henry are the co-authors of *Screening the Posthuman* (Oxford University Press, 2023) and created a related video essay in collaboration with Caitlin Lynch.

- **Claire Henry** is a lecturer and discipline lead in Screen at Flinders University, Adelaide. Claire is the author of *Revisionist Rape-Revenge: Redefining a Film Genre* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), the BFI Film Classics title on *Eraserhead* (BFI/Bloomsbury, 2023) and articles in journals such as *Studies in European Cinema*, *Open Cultural Studies*, *Frames Cinema Journal* and *Senses of Cinema*.
- **Pansy Duncan** is a senior lecturer and programme coordinator in Media Studies at Massey University, Auckland. Pansy is the author of *The Emotional Life of Postmodern Film* (Routledge, 2016) and has published articles on film aesthetics and film history in venues including *Screen*, *JCMS*, *PMLA*, *Cultural Critique* and *Feminist Media Studies*.
- **Missy Molloy** is a senior lecturer and programme coordinator in Film at Victoria University of Wellington. Missy co-edited *Refocus: The Films of Susanne Bier* (Edinburgh UP, 2018) and is co-author of a forthcoming book on Angelina Jolie's multimedia activism, with other recent work appearing in journals such as *JCMS*, *Journal of Environmental Media*, and *Jump Cut*.

Since 2019, we have collaborated on *Screening the Posthuman* (forthcoming from Oxford University Press in 2023), a book-length study of twenty-first century cinema's engagement with the rapidly-shifting dynamic between the human and more-than-human world (in the wake of radical technological, ecological, cultural and social change). In the final phase of our book's gestation, we decided to create a video essay (in collaboration with research assistant Caitlyn Lynch) that would unpack some of the book's recurring themes. While *Screening the Posthuman* seeks to differentiate the various sub-types of posthuman cinema, e.g. apocalyptic, queer and eco-material (to name a few), the video essay seeks to draw new connections between them in an accessible medium. In this paper, we present our video essay and discuss the creative and collaborative processes that were distinct from our practice as co-authors on the scholarly monograph. We reflect on how *Air Doll* (Kûki ningyô, dir. Hirokazu Kore-eda 2009) and *On Body and Soul* (Testról és lélekról, dir. Ildiko Enyedi 2017) were selected as case studies, and how the audio-visual method engendered new associations, ideas, and research findings.

Catherine Fowler

Normalising consent and co-ordinating intimacy
in *Normal People* (Lenny Abrahamson; Hettie
Macdonald, Ireland/UK, BBC Three/RTÉ One/Hulu
2020) (presentation)

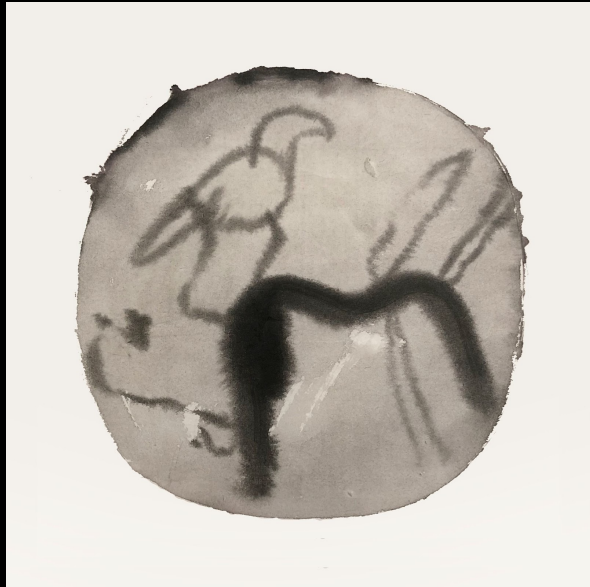
Biography

Catherine Fowler is Professor in Film and Media at Otago University, New Zealand. She has published widely on Feminism, women filmmakers and the film/art axis of influence. She is the author of the BFI Film Classic for *Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (BFI/Bloomsbury, 2022) and of the monograph *Sally Potter* (University of Illinois Press, 2009). Her research on video essays has appeared in *Cinema Journal*, *Screen Education* and the *Journal of Media and Practice Education*.

In this presentation I will share my research on the changing landscape for the representation of intimacy on screen, post-#MeToo. Focusing on the 2020 tv series *Normal People* I will argue that we are invited to experience new kinds of performance that demand new ways of reading. According to Lauren Berlant: 'to intimate is to communicate with the sparsest of signs and gestures, and at its root intimacy has the quality of eloquence and brevity.' (1998, 281). Audio-visual analysis allows us to break down the smallest of signs and pay micro-attention to bodies, their gestures, movements and cues. More importantly, as other advocates for video essays have argued, we are able to critique the audio-visual *through* the audio-visual, rather than having to put sounds and images into words. In the case of the representation of intimacy on screen the ability to explore through looking and listening is particular welcome, as I will illustrate by focusing on the potency of an exhalation followed by an inhalation in a key scene in *Normal People*.

Damian Gascoigne

High Wind Over Hasegawa
(2022, screen work)



Biography

Damian Gascoigne is an animation artist, specialising in gestural hand drawing. He recently completed a PhD at RMIT, focusing on the survival of hand drawing in the digital era.

Having worked as an animation director in London, Gascoigne moved to Sydney in 2012 to set up the new Animation degree at UTS. Recent exhibitions include the NG Gallery Sydney and Bathurst Regional Gallery. He was a finalist for the JADA Drawing Prize in 2020 and the Lester Portrait Prize in 2022.

Tohaku Hasegawa painted the 'Pine Trees' screens around 1595, but the image is so immediate, so vital, it feels as if the ink has just dried. After wrestling with its unimprovable perfection for a long time, I began sampling the image, making loose gestural ink drawings, as if co-opting myself into the narrative. This developed first into an extended drawing series, interweaving my own diaristic drawings with fragments of Hasegawa's masterpiece, and finally into a hand drawn animation work for exhibition.

The subject of this artist's talk is '*High Wind Over Hasegawa*,' a discussion of how movement in making drawings relates to drawn movement in animation. Shown at Bathurst Regional Gallery in March 2022, the two-screen work links Hasegawa's Pine Trees to my fascination with Buddhist ideas of non-attachment. To explore non-attachment, The animation is split across two screens and then allowed to drift inexorably out of sync. Depending on one's viewpoint it either falls apart or comes alive in this process. Whatever happens is beyond my control.

This presentation draws upon my recently completed PhD at RMIT, investigating the drawn gesture and its stubborn resistance to digital replacement. The talk will unpack issues around control and abandonment for animation, looking at the calligraphic gesture and universal dynamism to argue for a return to body-driven making and the indelible mark.

Charting the development and execution of the new piece, attention is paid to the emergence of a shift in the digital contract within my practice, to the point where it operates only as an organizing space, in service of material gesture, forward momentum, and consequential decisions.

Catherine Gough-Brady

Interview With A Sand Dune (2023)



Biography

Catherine Gough-Brady is an award-winning documentary producer and director who publishes on the relational nature of documentary production processes. She is the co-editor of the book *Constructions of the Real (2023)*. Catherine produced and directed six ABC TV documentary series. Her most recent TV half-hour for ABC TV is *The Communicator (2022)*. Catherine is Head of Postgraduate Studies at JMC Academy in Australia, and is an associate editor of *Screenworks*.

Donna Haraway paraphrases Marilyn Strathern when she suggests that “It matters what matters we use to think other matters with” (2016). If an interview is a method (or matter) that we use when filming humans, what would occur if that method is applied to the non-human? Through creating a series of films I explore how using interview as a method changes the way I film and edit the footage of something that I would normally observe.

In 2021, I began this creative practice experiment by interviewing a tree (this short film was delivered at Visible Evidence 2021, broadcast on Delete TV in Austria in 2022, nominated for an ATOM Award and used as the visuals for a series of improvised performances by Seensound musicians). I found that using interview as a method forced me to think about the opinion/experience of the tree rather than merely reproduce its audio-visualness. I noticed that the relationship I developed with the tree, and the footage, is interrogative and reflective and a tentative new film language emerges.

For the film that is screening, I have been collaborating with the composer Gail Priest to develop this idea further by interviewing a sand dune. In particular with this film I am exploring if this relationship between us and the dune also contains the transversal time qualities (past, present and future) found in an interview with a person.

Marco Ianniello

The Enhanced Digital Pilot Screenplay
(presentation)

Biography

Marco is an independent documentary filmmaker, screenwriter and senior academic at The University of Notre Dame Australia. His award winning documentaries have screened on Australian television and festivals worldwide. In addition to documentary Marco specialises in TV drama screenplay writing, editing and critical research. He recently completed a creative practice Ph.D investigating the structures and characters of TV drama screenplays and this work will be the basis of the forthcoming book, *The Serial Drama Complex* to be released in 2024.

This paper will present a new version of the pilot screenplay format that has been enhanced via digital delivery: a screenplay designed to be read on a tablet or computer. Kathryn Millard noted that ‘the digital era offers the possibility to...[reunite] screenplay and film production in an expanded notion of the screenplay’ (2014, p. 41). In the screen industry a speculative pilot screenplay and supporting documents (notably a series bible) are frequently delivered as a combined package. Yet, these industry documents typically lack the serial considerations of the show in ways that point to the relationship between the story structure and character development, especially across multiple seasons. This enhanced digital pilot screenplay for a new drama *Sorella*, has been created to communicate the seriality and, thus, long-form potential of a script and will express this using writing usually reserved for the series bible embedded in the pilot screenplay.

This digital document is still focussed on the written word but incorporates hyperlinks as story signposts that link to additional serial story information. The work can still be printed and read traditionally, yet it contains digital options to increase interactivity for deeper story engagement (as one would eventually experience watching the show). These embedded options are intended to give readers additional information that describes the serial elements of the project (i.e., structure and thematic and character layering) as they read a pilot script.

Identifying and communicating the serial storytelling features is achieved with the enhanced pilot screenplay, which also aims to provide a detailed yet accessible story-telling representation for producers, funding bodies, writers’ rooms and creators. This paper will present the first act of the enhanced digital pilot.

Michelle Johnston

Earthship Freo (2023, screen work)



Biography

Dr Michelle Johnston is a senior lecturer at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia where she teaches Screen Arts. Her research and creative practice are informed by participatory action research and have provided opportunities to work with First Nations Peoples. Her collaborative work has produced a feature documentary called *Heart Coming Home* (2017) and a book called *Working Two Way* (2020) with Aboriginal co-author, Professor Simon Forest.

Communicating climate change is a challenge for filmmakers and academics who are eager to contribute to change and a sustainable future for our planet. On the one hand there is more information than ever about sustainable living, but audiences feel overwhelmed and helpless in the face of misinformation and climate disaster. How can filmmakers effectively tell stories about a world in crisis that compels audiences to engage and act to create the change the world so urgently needs.

Earthship Freo is a small local story about activism and community that was produced by two academics. As academics the filmmakers were guided by the ethical research standards demanded by their universities as well as their own desire to employ participatory production techniques in making the film. The resulting tension between ethical storytelling and the desire to use narrative techniques that appeal to a mainstream audience is explored. Furthermore, the film is an opportunity to consider the role of the academic activist – what limitations and potential do academics have to contribute to issues of social justice and sustainability?

Communicating climate change is a growing field of research and *Earthship Freo* provides a case study and an opportunity to discuss that research. Local success stories with practical suggestions for change have emerged as one of the most effective ways of engaging with communities to create change. But small, complex stories are not necessarily the stories that broadcasters and audiences, hungry for entertainment, are looking for.

Michael Keerdo-Dawson

The Limits of Consent (2022, screen work)



Biography

After a decade in the British film and television industry and with several credits as writer-director under his belt, Keerdo-Dawson moved to Estonia and began teaching screenwriting at the Baltic Film, Media and Arts School. *'The Limits of Consent'* is the first time he has made in a film in Estonia and experimented with interactive cinema. Keerdo-Dawson is also in the final year of his PhD in Audiovisual Arts.

Interactivity has many utilities and possibilities but I chose to employ it as a disruptive method for my PhD research, through the creation of an interactive fiction film, *'The Limits of Consent'*. As a writer-director, I am torn between twin impulses: the desire entertain my audience by conforming to narrative conventions and offering them drama, and the desire to experiment with the form and confound the audience's expectations by offering them anti-drama. These impulses followed me into my current research and I am currently reflecting on how they were effected by interactivity. But from where do these impulses emerge?

Narrative conventions in dramatic storytelling bring about a partial structural foreclosure of the narrative, a foreclosure which often reduces the narrative to a fixed line of events and climax. These conventions hold a strong gravity for screenwriters and directors because they promise coherence and a workable structure; moreover, they represent the best chance at *entertaining* the audience. However, the writer-director's desire to break with such conventions and offer something more original often pulls them in the other direction towards *experimentation*.

Interactivity, allowed for the creation of nine different endings for the film and opened up the possibility for me to offer my audience both drama and anti-drama co-existing and no necessarily overriding one another in the same film. In this research, I explore the implications of this film and its impact on my extant filmmaking practice.

Patrick Kelly

'Honcho Disko: The Documentary: The Lecture' (2023, screen work)



Biography

Dr Patrick Kelly is a Senior Lecturer in Media in RMIT University's School of Media & Communication. He is a creative screen practitioner, and has served as a Co-Director of Critical Animals creative research symposium and exhibition, as part of This Is Not Art festival. His creative works have been exhibited by The Lock Up Gallery, MARS Gallery, Midsumma Festival, Cinemq (Shanghai), the Tropical Alternative Film Festival, Sightlines: Screen Production and the Academy, Canada International Film Festival, Queensland New Filmmakers Awards, and the International iPod Film Festival.

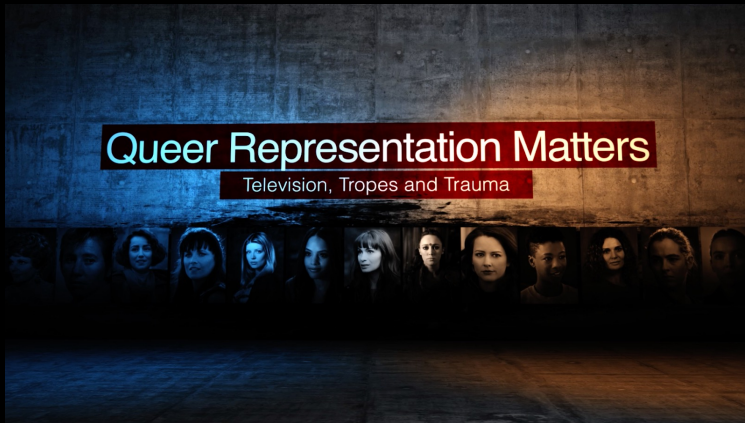
Honcho Disko: The Documentary: The Lecture is a filmic presentation resulting from my queer practice-led research through screen production. Embracing notions of performativity (Haseman 2007; Butler 1990) and self-bricolage (Rabinow 1997) and drawing on Foucault (1978) and Rabinow (1997), Baker positions creative practice, research and subjectivity as 'intertwined and mutually informing each other' (2011, p.34). As such, my film aims to intertwine my own creative practice, research and subjectivity; exploring ideas of nostalgia, and the ethics of ownership of queer stories.

The film is the outcome of work created for Melbourne's queer arts festival 'Midsumma'. It was conceived as an in-person live filmic performance, then pivoted online due to COVID-19, and presented as a pre-recorded live screening on YouTube. The 90-min event contained footage shot at the Australian queer performance party 'Honcho Disko' over 2018-19 (ie. *the Honcho Disko: The Documentary* elements), new material to form of a 'lecture' of sorts (*The Lecture* condensed for this submission), and two new pre-recorded performances by regular Honcho Disko performers (*The Musical* – removed for this submission). A condensed version is presented here in order to focus more on the aspects that examine the idea of nostalgia.

Using case studies of other queer screen practitioners as well as my own creative work, I examine how queer filmmakers consider their own perspectives when making documentary film about queer community. Further, the work raises questions to do with the sense of nostalgia that can emerge from such work, especially when reviewing video material captured of queer spaces from 'the beforetimes' during the age of COVID. Key influences include the work of filmmakers such as Paul Andrew, Jenni Olson, Nelson Sullivan; and multimedia performances such as Mary Angley's *Grief Lightning*, Zia Anger's *My First Film*, and local favourite *Mausoleum: A Melbourne Drag Show* by Tilly Capulet.

Natalie Krikowa

Queer Representation Matters: Television, tropes and trauma (2023, presentation)



Biography

Dr. Natalie Krikowa is a media scholar and creative practice researcher at the University of Technology Sydney. Her research focuses on LGBTIQ+ media representation, stories, audiences, and communities. Her creative practice works include *The Newtown Girls* (2012), *All Our Lesbians Are Dead!* (2017), and *Queer Representation Matters* (2023).

Has queer representation in screen media really changed or improved? Do queer audiences still suffer trauma from watching their favourite queer characters die on television? While lesbian, bisexual and queer women characters and storylines have increased significantly in the last decade, fans are often left with tragedy and trauma as their legacy. The term “bury your gays” has been around for decades and refers to the killing of LGBTQ+ characters (usually lesbian or bisexual women) often because they are queer or to advance the story of a cis, straight (usually male) character. Recently a new trope “cancel your gays” has emerged due to new streaming platforms’ business models, which sees shows with queer characters and storylines being cancelled after one or two seasons, again reinforcing audiences’ feelings that queer people are not entitled to endings (let alone happy ones).

Issues around queer representation such as the “bury your gays” trope are known by most LGBTIQ+ people and some screen studies academics, but not many non-LGBTIQ+ people know of its existence, its history, and its damaging impact on LGBTIQ+ audiences. These issues are explored through an interactive documentary, *Queer Representation Matters* (2023), where users can explore the interactive documentary through different pathways including a historical timeline that illustrates how these issues and themes have evolved over the last 100 years, interviews with academics and creative practitioners, and exploring the *All Our Lesbians Are Dead!* theatrical play. This project links theory and practice to bring discussions of media representation from the academy into the public sphere in an accessible way. It demonstrates the capacity of participatory digital media to inform and educate a wider audience on important issues of media representation.

Carlos Manrique Clavijo

Emotive silence and the soundscapes of an endangered world: A case-study of rhetorical devices used in sound design for a VR documentary (2021, presentation)



Biography

Carlos Manrique Clavijo is a Colombian-Australian sound designer and animation producer, co-founder of Karu-Karu. He's received awards for sound design, music and animation in Australia, Europe and the Americas. He teaches at the University of South Australia and previously ran the sound studios of the South Australian Film Corporation. Carlos is the Australian Screen Sound Guild SA representative and has worked with Monkeystack animation over several years.

<https://imdb.to/3K225XL>

Thin Ice VR is a VR documentary in which environmental scientist and explorer Tim Jarvis AM recreates Shackleton's journey while attempting his 1914 Trans-Antarctic expedition. This presentation will offer a discussion of the sound design pipeline and methodology, including analysis of sound palettes, the editorial process and the mix.

Sound for TIVR grew out of silence; in the story-world and the pipeline. It starts with an empty room; a blank slate created from a 3D model and eases the audience into the story through a doorway of originally silent, archival newsreels.

It takes the audience on a boat journey through the treacherous Southern Ocean, a time-lapse sequence of melting glaciers, the arrival at a whaling station and several other unique soundscapes. In this voyage, the world is built through sound design, as the audio that arrived for post-production was limited to dialogue and VO.

Setting aesthetic boundaries created interesting creative challenges: the sound palette was primarily limited to wind, water and ice. But within them, the immense variety of their subtleties and expressiveness revealed itself. Winds, just to name an example, were made of a combination of bespoke recordings, sound libraries and synthesised sounds. Aside from the storytelling challenges of the project, scientific accuracy had to be observed regarding elements like the local fauna of the places being recreated.

From a technical perspective, multiple experiments were carried out, leading to the creation of several drafts: 5.1 theatrical for 360 video, a P.A. system inside a dome and, binaural versions on VR headsets. After comparing the implications of each option (immersiveness, dynamic range, sense of wonder, feeling of a collective experience, etc.), the conclusion was to design the experience mainly for VR headsets but with some background elements playing through the P.A. system.

Kim Munro

The Futorical Society (and the woman who killed the weeds) (2023, screen work)



Biography

Kim Munro is a lecturer at University of South Australia and a documentary researcher and practitioner interested in the intersection between immersive and interactive technology and social and environmental issues. She is the co-editor of the recently published *Constructions of the Real: Intersections of Documentary-based Film Practice and Theory* (Intellect, 2023). Kim was also the conference programmer for the 2020 and 2021 Australian International Documentary Conferences (AIDC).

In *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* (1988), feminist science fiction writer Ursula Le Guin argues for the importance of other kinds of stories - those that resist the techno-utopian heroic arc. Rather than the need for the singular hero and neat resolution, Le Guin makes a case for stories organised around not a linear trajectory, but rather a carrier bag or a container. In other words, structures that might be called benevolent spaces where nothing is prioritised nor excluded. How then might the carrier bag theory lend itself to reimagining how histories are told and futures imagined?

With this question in mind, I began my 2-week artist residency in the Warracknabeal Courthouse to create. Here, 'futorical' is imagined as 'counter', or companion to, 'historical'. Through workshops with local community members, I used oral histories as well as photogrammetry and LiDar scanning to recast personal objects and speculate what stories are not told. The resulting film, *The Futorical Society (and the woman who killed the weeds)* weaves together precious and curious objects, local wildlife, built and natural landscapes and the story of the little-known agricultural hero, Vera Molnar, who saved the local grain industry. Through the interplay between history and future, and fixed and ephemeral, *The Futorical Society* presents a way to reimagine the past, present and future of regional Australia.

Karen Nobes & Susan Kerrigan

White Noise (2022, screen work)



Biographies

Karen Nobes (not presenting) is a qualitative researcher and a writer, director, producer in the film and television industries of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Karen is a White Australian. Karen's research areas include the manifestation of systemic inequalities, racism in Australian broadcast media and critical whiteness studies. Karen's creative practice PhD includes the feature length documentary *White Noise* broadcast on National Indigenous Television Australia (NITV) 2022.

Susan Kerrigan is a Department Chair in Film, Games and Animation and Professor in Film and Television at Swinburne University of Technology, Australia. She is a Creative Practice Researcher and has coedited ten special issues of journals and authored books on Screen Production Research, filmmaking, practice-led research and Creative Industries. Susan is an Australian born, White researcher of Anglo-Celtic heritage.

The documentary *White Noise* (SBS 2022) explores why commercial television dramas exclude First Nations people, especially Australian soap operas. While there has been some highly successful First Nations content on the Australian public broadcaster ie. *Cleverman* (2016-2017), *Redfern Now* (2012-2015) and *Mystery Road* (2018 -), First Nations content on commercial television is rare. In 2010, Television critic Andrew Jakubowicz stated that the “streets of *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* remained blandly Anglo, with an occasional and often violently resented non-White newcomer”. White Australian culture, as represented in *Neighbours*, was broadcast for thirty-seven years to more than sixty countries worldwide. In 2022 *Neighbours* contract with UK broadcaster was not renewed, though the production was cancelled, it was picked up by a Streaming service and production has re-commenced.

This research is framed by theories of postcolonialism, whiteness and identity and explores the question “How does commercial television drama production perpetuate a cultural *terra nullius*?”. Where Terra nullius — “nobody’s land” was the term used by the British to describe Australia as a land legally deemed as being unoccupied. Drawing on the opinions of fourteen First Nations and White Australian drama and screen practitioners, the documentary demonstrates there are people willing to speak out against the systemic greenlighting processes used within commercial television that deny the presence of First Nations content on Australian screens.

The documentary screened on SBS in 2022. The main audience for this film are Australians who understand how issues of racism are perpetuated by the power relationships of commercial television production.

The work is significant because its themes “the medium is the message”, “white power”, “casting”, “colour-blind casting” and “the right to write” inform much needed discussions by establishing terms, language, practices and interactions as sites of contestation by directly connecting the creative production systems for Australian scripted drama processes to post-colonialising behaviours.

Shannon Owen

Set the Tone (2019, screen work)



Biography

Shannon Owen is a documentary filmmaker and practitioner researcher. Her film work has been broadcast nationally and internationally, screened at an array of festivals and exhibited in Australia's National Portrait Gallery. Shannon lectures in Film and Television at the VCA, University of Melbourne, where she co-ordinates the graduate documentary program. She is currently completing a PhD at MADA, Monash University exploring the intersections between documentary making and futures discourse.

This creative practice research explores what happens when a documentary lens is pointed at the future. It asks how documentary film can be utilized to imagine alternative futures and move beyond the past/present temporal frame of traditional documentary narratives to harness documentary's potential for social impact.

A critical engagement with contemporary media technologies and their socio-cultural locations has made way for an expanded documentary ecology that encourages a multiplicity of voices and outcomes. Documentary theorists and practitioners continue to prove that the boundaries of documentary are open to new and evolving forms, however research that directly addresses future temporality in documentary is only recently beginning to emerge. Here anthropologist and filmmaker Juan Salazar challenges the documentary traditions fixedness in the historical world and calls for a future focused re-positioning of documentary as "the creative treatment of possibility" (Salazar, 2015).

Heeding Salazar's call, this research brings futures discourse and documentary filmmaking techniques into dialogue to create opportunities for emergent production practices that seek to generate aspirational futures. Drawing on concepts and methods from futures discourse, specifically the futures enclaves of social foresight and experiential futures, this project uncovers ways in which documentary filmmaking can be employed as a creative intervention within the Australian South Sudanese diaspora to seed intergenerational dialogue and imagine alternative futures that encourage political agency.

This practice research has resulted in the co-creation of the pilot episode of *Set the Tone*, an on-line talk show created by and for young women from the African diaspora to deep-dive into issues that matter to them and challenge assumptions from inside and outside their communities. 'Documentary Futures' has emerged as a technique that engages politically engaged documentary practice to not only imagine, but to create alternative futures.

Salazar, Juan Francisco. 2015. "Anticipatory Modes of Futuring Planetary Change in Documentary Film." In *A Companion to Contemporary Documentary Film*, First Edition. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Mandy Rose

Immersive nonfiction media and climate-resilient futures: affordances, exchanges and practice (presentation)

Biography

Mandy Rose is Professor of Documentary & Digital Cultures at UWE Bristol. Her research examines evolving documentary practices, and the potential of documentary to respond to climate emergency. Mandy is Co-Investigator on the UKRI Strength in Places My World programme. From 2017-2020 she was Co-Investigator on the EPSRC Virtual Realities: Immersive Documentary Encounters project. She is Co-Convenor of i-Docs, and co-editor of *i-docs: the evolving practices of interactive documentary* - Wallflower Press 2017. During twenty years at the BBC Mandy oversaw award-winning interactive and participatory media initiatives.

This paper addresses the affordances of emerging media capture technologies (LIDAR, Photogrammetry) and the multi-sensory environment of virtual reality to explore the ways that producers are harnessing their potential to engage immersants with more-than-human perspectives (species, temporal, scalar). “Post-lenticular visualities” introduce ‘ways of seeing’ beyond the potential of the camera as metaphor or substitute for the human eye. Multi-sensory media allow for new forms of mediated embodiment and affective engagement that decentre the gaze as locus of knowledge. I’ll consider these affordances in relation to their potential to engage immersants with more-than-human Umwelten (lifeworlds) – Jacob von Uexkull’s concept of the perceptual world unique to each species that emerges from their particular perceptual apparatus. Picking up on Belinda Smaill’s discussion of Uexkull’s concept in relation to documentary cinema, I’ll consider what contribution immersive media might make to a practice that can “throw into relief human ways of knowing and perceiving, triggering a fuller understanding of the specificity of human perception (rather than seeing it as universal)” (Smaill 2016).

Craig Rossiter

Emerging Visions: Adventures in Australian Screen (2023, documentary excerpt)



Biography

Craig Rossiter is a PhD candidate at Central Queensland University in the School of Education and the Arts. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Australian National University and a Master of Business (Research) in customer orientation and innovation from Queensland University of Technology. As part of his undergraduate degree, Craig attended film school at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He was lead author of the Emerging Visions report commissioned by Metro Screen and released in 2015. He has also co-authored a book chapter and journal article on the Australian film and television industry and has written and produced both short films and web-series that have screened locally and internationally at festivals such as Palm Springs, Frameline, Uppsala, and the Seoul, Sicily and NZ Webfests.

Emerging Visions: Adventures in Australian Screen Production tells the story of seven of Australia's most successful filmmakers and how they made their way from 'zero to hero' in their quest for a career in the precarious wilderness of Australian film and television production.

This poetic documentary is based on footage from interviews with filmmakers shot during the drafting of the 'Emerging Visions: Career Pathways in the Australian Screen Production Industry' Report released in 2015 by the now defunct Screen Resource Organisation, Metro Screen. This organisation supported many early Australian filmmakers with equipment, production funding, training and a place to network with other filmmakers as they answered the industry's call to adventure.

Using interview footage with filmmakers and intercut with archival footage and scenes from early work, *Emerging Visions: Adventures in Australian Screen* presents the lived experience of these Australian screen practitioners as they navigated their way into and through a tough and little-understood industry. It structures the stages and pitfalls of their journey using Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey to offer insights and hope for those pursuing, or thinking about pursuing, a career in film and television production.

Lachlan Salt

The Prestige Title Sequence (presentation)

Biography

Lachlan Salt is currently undertaking a PhD thesis at Flinders University examining television title sequences from 2010 to 2019 made by two U.S. motion graphic design companies: Elastic and Imaginary Forces. He has tutored two topics at Flinders University: *Film Form and Analysis* and *The Hollywood Industry*. His research interests include video essays, television studies, film form, Hollywood and film archives.

The video essay I am presenting for the panel, The Prestige Title Sequence, is extrapolated from my PhD thesis that examines the industry and aesthetics of United States television title sequences made by two motion graphic design studios (Elastic and Imaginary Forces) in the 2010s. The television title sequence offers an avenue through which television scholars can investigate fragmented television production and aesthetic practices in the 2010s. To better argue the discrete aesthetic nature of what I call the prestige title sequence, the PhD thesis uses 10 miniature video essays. These video essays complement a traditional written component in my thesis by demonstrating core ideas and concepts. The 10-minute video essay for the panel is derived from those smaller video essays and is an overview of the key arguments in the thesis.

Both the title sequence and the video essay are pastiche objects that utilise a canvas of pre-existing aural-visual sources to create their respective form. As such, the aural-visual method to explore digitised and hybrid aesthetics is suitable and raises interesting questions surrounding larger television practices like media convergence, prestige branding and the ontology of digital aesthetics. The video essay is rooted in the written word and traditional research methods, an extension as opposed to the poetic method rooted in combining, sourcing, and experimenting with different images and sounds. While the video essay for the panel contains elements of both forms it is still a visual extension of my PhD thesis and thus raises broader questions around how video essays can complement and further traditional written research.

Julia Scott-Stevenson

Immersive nonfiction media and climate-resilient futures: affordances, exchanges and practice (presentation)

Biography

Dr Julia Scott-Stevenson is a researcher, producer and curator of interactive and immersive media. Her current UTS Chancellor's Research Fellowship project uses practice-led research to explore how immersive media (virtual, augmented and mixed reality) might address the climate crisis. Julia was previously a research fellow with i-Docs at UWE Bristol, UK, where she developed a manifesto for virtual futures. Julia holds a PhD in interactive documentary and social impact.

Over the last decade, the evolution of the i-docs form has expanded to encompass immersive and experiential media technologies. The continually evolving properties of these forms (collectively termed here XR) are gradually allowing the participant to engage her whole body, in a multi-sensory way, in the developed experiences. A great deal of technological experimentation and scholarship in XR thus far has tended to examine what level of sensory experience is possible (e.g. Slater 2018), and how 'authentic' sensory immersion becomes. In this paper, I will approach from a different perspective – that of the diversity of sensory experiences possible *between* different participants, and the possibilities for developing an understanding of the permeability of bodies and interchange with their surrounding environments. Additionally, rather than a focus on the veracity or 'realness' of the experience, the notions of glitch and mistake will be explored.

In computational media, errors are generally seen as undesirable. This may also be the case with human bodies, in terms of illness for instance, but biological evolution occurs through variation leading to diversity and robustness. I will draw parallels between the glitchy aesthetic that can be found in many immersive media projects, and the potential for repositioning our understandings of human bodies as complex, natural systems, engaged in ongoing exchange with the surrounding environment. I will consider what alternate understandings of glitch may offer for developing the socio-ecological imagination.

Michael Sergi

Kirakira Hospital 2014 - 243 kms from Honiara
(presentation)



Biography

Michael Sergi was the Director of the Bond University Film and Television School from 2008 to 2023. Prior to becoming an academic he directed many episodes of network television dramas including, *Home and Away*, *Neighbours*, *Shortland Street* (NZ), *Pacific Drive*, and *Breakers*. Recently, he has been consulting as a directors' mentor on the indigenous television documentary series *Blak Portraits* for NITV, currently in post-production.

Kirakira Hospital 243 kms from Honiara is an observational ethnographic documentary which captures the daily happens in a hospital on the remote island of Kirakira, which is 243 kms from Honiara, the capital Solomon Islands, and 2,137 kms from my home on the Gold Coast. The documentary was shot over five-days in September 2014. The narrative strives to tell the story of the highly committed, caring, and supportive hospital staff as they provided medical care to a broad range of patients presenting with a complex array of medical conditions. However, due to an ethical crisis regarding the possible exploitation of the human subjects I ceased production of the film during post-production. In 2022 I renewed post-production on the film after having engaged with more recent scholarly works that presented the relationship between the observational filmmaker and human subjects in a more nuanced and complex light. The concept that the observational filmmaker is in a mutually agreed relationship with their human subjects, where they co-share space and time in a live and interactive process, rather than a detached voyeuristic witness, offers a more humanistic collaborative engagement, and deals with many of the ethical challenges faced by observational documentarians in the past. Thus, the camera's presence is not detached, nor is it placed in an optimal position for the visual aesthetics where the human subject is adjusted and manipulated to maximise those visual aesthetics. Space is actively shared between the human subjects and the filmmaker, such that the negotiation of that space, in a constantly flowing mutually respectful manner in long-take real time, becomes a tangible part of the filmmaking process and imbues the film with the active participatory presence of the human subjects and filmmaker in partnership.

Dafydd Sills-Jones

Cafflogion Variations #3: Speckled Ridge
(2022, screen work)



Biography

Dafydd Sills-Jones is Deputy Head of Te Kura Whakapāho (School of Communication Studies) at Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland University of Technology) in Aotearoa-New Zealand. Dafydd is co-editor of Peter Lang's 'Documentary Film Cultures' book series, and is on the editorial board of *Media History* (Taylor & Francis), the *Journal of Media Practice and Education* (Taylor & Francis), and The International Journal of Creative Media Research (Bath Spa University).

This short film is the third in a series of variations on a novella written in Cymraeg (Welsh) in 1979. The novella tells the story of an off-grid settlement under the shadow of a totalitarian, urban civilisation (Jones, 1979).

'Classical' adaptation (Hutcheon, 2012), requires what Stam calls an "extractable essence", at the centre of a narrative, which is illusory, as the "literary text is not a closed, but an open structure... to be reworked by boundless context." (Stam 2000: 57). We took up Stam's implicit challenge, to remain true to an 'origin', without being tied to an 'essence', through the application the iterative model of practice research outlined by Smith and Dean (2009: 20), and turned orthodox adaptation into a set of free-wheeling variations where each 'translation' of material into forms, platforms and planes of engagement, sparked off different questions, and reached new findings.

After variation one (feature film script) and variation two (interactive game script), the third variation addresses the problem *Cafflogion's* narrative density presents for the crucial interplay between character and theme (Batty, 2015). It does this by looking at the interplay between the grammatical possibilities of vertical composition, and the situated literary performance of part of the *Cafflogion* text. We experimented with various vertical framings, in order to disrupt the usual sense of foreground and background (Ross, 2020: 105), and to emphasise the performer's body over and above the primacy of eye-lines (Bordwell, 2009). We also sought to disrupt verticality by reintroducing elements of horizontality in split-screen editing.

We found that the vertical frame reorientates the viewer's understanding of the relationship between landscape and figure, by disrupting the usual contextualisation of figure within a potentially understandable and static landscape, especially when the camera is panned through landscape. This induces a gaze that requires constant re-contextualisation.

Batty, C. (2015). A screenwriter's journey into theme, and how creative writing research might help us to define screen production research. *Studies in Australasian Cinema*, 9(2), 110-121.

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Hutcheon, L. (2012). *A Theory of Adaptation*. Routledge.

Jones, R Gerallt. (1979) *Cafflogion*. Llandysul, Gwasg Gomer.

Menotti, G. (2019). Discourses around vertical videos: an archaeology of "wrong" aspect ratios¹. *ARS* (São Paulo), 17, pp.147-165.

Stam, R. (2000). "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation," in James Naremore, ed., *Film Adaptation* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2000).

Liam Somerville (CAPITAL WASTE)

ESCHATECH VR (2023, Virtual Reality Experience)



Biography

Liam Somerville aka CAPITAL WASTE is a video artist and cinematographer living and working on Kaurna Land in South Australia. His digital moving image works often circulate around inputting the beautiful imperfections of the human experience into the digital environment to create cyborg interactions with mesmerising visual outputs including feature films, music videos, live performance, video installations, games and immersive digital experiences.

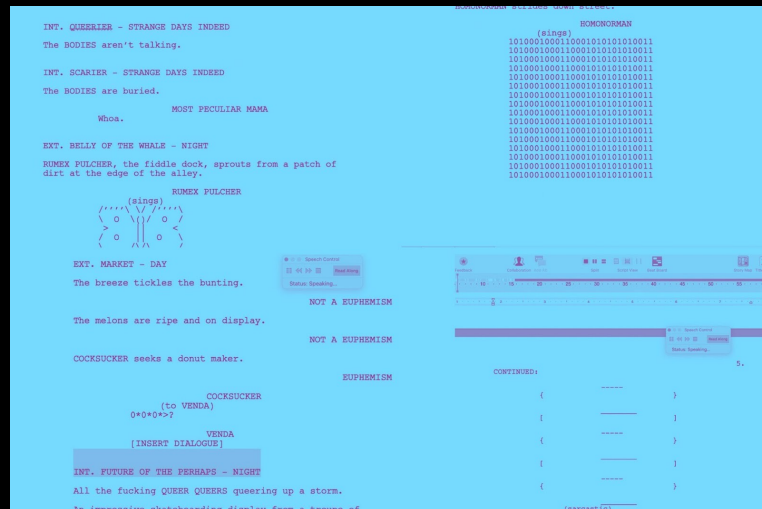
ESCHATECH VR, is an immersive, climate-fiction VR experience of the last 100 seconds of humanity on planet earth, made possible with the assistance of the Flinders University ASSEMBLAGE: Artist in Residence Program 2022. The gamified simulation throws the player into the last chapter of the anthropocene as they awake in a survival bunker with a descending timer strapped to their wrist. When the player ventures outside, they are confronted by gigantic titans, anthropomorphic representations of the rampant capitalism, resource pillaging and irresponsible pollution that is contributing to the extinction of humans via catastrophic environmental annihilation.

The player has no objectives, no guide and so is totally free to explore a small portion of the vast desolate landscape within their limited time. Throughout the experience the player is confronted with philosophical metaphors which are to inspire discussion with other players about their existence and the environmental footprint of humankind. The experience touches on issues like corporate hoarding of resources and capital, water/food shortages, posthumanism, destruction of biodiversity and the existential impacts of environmental climate change on humankind.

Created on Unreal Engine and presented on Oculus Quest 2 the experience utilises motion capture data from Flinders University's integrated virtual production facility, The Void.

Stayci Taylor

Not a Euphemism: queering screen production with screenplay-as-film (presentation)



Not a Euphemism (Taylor 2023)

Biography

Stayci Taylor is a senior lecturer at RMIT. She brings to her research an ongoing practice in screenwriting, script editing and performance. She is the co-editor of two books on script development, and one on creative writing methods. Publications include works in *TEXT*, *New Writing and the Journal of Screenwriting*.

This paper interrogates the role of the screenplay in screen production workflows. By making a moving image artefact of the screenplay, rather than *from* the screenplay, the video demonstrates a queering of screenplay formatting, structure and function. As part of a broader assemblage of queer screen production (Black et al 2022), initial iterations of the project have screened at three national and international conferences, once as a keynote presentation. The research draws on Price's notion of the screenplay's 'troublesome ghostliness' (2010), and Sternberg's definition of a screenplay's 'scene text' (everything but the dialogue) (1997). While the screenplay is foregrounded, its conventions are disrupted as a way of exploring the boundaries of doxa, and refusing traditional content and form (Halberstam 2012). The work-in-progress conflates the intended medium for the screenplay and its status as discrete form with its own literary properties (Sherry 2014). Its contribution lies in its experimental exploration of standardised elements of the screenplay form, repurposed beyond their role in production practices. The 'transition', aligned right and used to suggest how one scene will move into the next, is used as a tool of visual rhythm for inserting puns and asides. Much of the dialogue is comprised entirely of punctuation, as an exercise in decentralising language and experimenting with a page's negative space. The scenes are constructed by first using the affordances of screenwriting software, such as voice assignation and read-along options, and then screen recording the results. In its explorations of how words work on the page, creating rhythm and disruption, the screenplay also contributes to the adjacent field of creative writing research. This project builds on its maker's previous scriptwriting-as-research expanding the function of scene headings beyond production functionality (Taylor 2018), and the wider application of screenwriting's invisibility (Taylor 2022).

Nicky Tyndale-Biscoe

The Soft-Skinned (2021, screen work)



Biography

Nicky Tyndale-Biscoe is a Melbourne-based filmmaker who works across documentary and drama. Her documentary *Mohamed Ali's Happy Day Feast* was broadcast on SBS, and nominated for an AFI award for Best Documentary. Her CineMedia(IFF) award-winning drama; *Ripe*, was broadcast on Arena/Foxtel. *The Soft-Skinned* is her most recent short drama.

She is a lecturer in Breadth at VCA School of Film and Television, and is a current PhD candidate at UniSA Creative.

The Soft-Skinned (2022) is a short that employs narrative fiction filmmaking as a methodological approach to exploring the military involvement of Australia in Afghanistan, and the subsequent mental health crisis in Australia's veteran community. Of the 26,000 + Australians who were deployed to Afghanistan between 2001-2020, only 41 were killed in action, but more than 700 have taken their own lives, since returning home. Female veterans are over-represented in these statistics (Brignone, 2008).

The Soft-Skinned was made using a range of practice-led methods to generate affective knowledge about the experience of women veterans returning from Afghanistan. I was curious about the intersection of collaborative practices in screen fiction, ethnographic film and observational documentary. Reflective practice and action-research (Berkeley, 2018) were central to the rehearsal and development process I engaged in with my cast/collaborators, including Hannah Monson, who plays protagonist Corporal Kath Davison. I employed various collaborative and performative methods including exercises and provocations devised by British director Mike Leigh (Marchant, 2013). These improvisational methods generated insights into what it feels like to be a returned service-woman living with moral injury to the actor, and ultimately, the audience. I intend to keep developing a performance methodology informed by this research, as I feel it has the potential to generate affective knowledge, reflection and recognition in a broad audience.

The Soft-Skinned has been screened in competition at Santa Barbara International Film Festival, Australians in Film (Hollywood), Flickerfest, MIFFplay, The Veterans Film Festival and St. Kilda Film festival. It won 'Best Film' (Masters' Narrative) at the 2021 VCA Graduate awards and was awarded the 'Margaret Lawrence Social Justice Award' in recognition of the film's social impact.

Berkeley, L. (2018). 'Lights, Camera, Research: the specificity of research in screen production', in Batty, C. & Kerrigan, S (Eds.) *Screen Production Research: Creative Practice as a Mode of Enquiry*. Palgrave Macmillan

Brignone, E. (2018). 'Suicidal ideation and behaviors among women veterans with recent exposure to intimate partner violence' in *General Hospital Psychiatry*, 55, pp. 60-64.

Marchant, R. *Devised and Directed by Mike Leigh*, Cardinale-Powell. B ed. Bloomsbury 2013, Chapter 6, 'Devising and Directing'

Simon Weaving

Almost The Night (2022, screen work)



Biography

Dr Simon Weaving is a filmmaker and Senior Lecturer at the University of Newcastle. He has research interests in genre screenwriting, cinematic narration and the changing face of distribution and exhibition in the cinema industry in Australia. Simon is currently the president of ASPERA and heads up the University of Newcastle's Bachelor of Media and Communication program.

“Cinema replaces the point of view of the gods”
Jean-Luc Godard (1963)

As a writer/director I have long been interested in exploring the unique properties of cinematic narration – the idea that there is something that clearly differentiates screen storytelling from written, oral, and performance-based modes. In 1937, Alfred Hitchcock, most closely connected with the idea of “pure cinema,” said “the screen ought to speak its own language, freshly coined, and it can’t do that unless it treats its acted scene as a piece of raw material which must be broken up, taken to bits, before it can be woven into an expressive visual pattern.” Hitchcock is suggesting a visual style with a focus on cinematography (the broken up bits) and editing (the woven pattern). More recently, David Bordwell (2006) refers to an “intensified continuity” of contemporary cinema style, with “rapid editing, bi-polar extremes of lens length, reliance on close shots, and wide-ranging camera movements.

My purpose with *Almost The Night* (along with Andy Gallagher, my collaborator) – was to create an evocative, accessible story that was “told” using the unique tools of cinema. To Bordwell’s list (of camera lens and movement, shot type, and editing) we add richly textured sound design, in an exploration of how “pure” cinematic storytelling can be.

Living in Newcastle, with a long history of shipwrecks, and some stunning and dangerous coastline, we decided to revisit the myth of the sirens, eschewing English-language dialogue scenes in favour of a complex sound-based communication system for the three siren characters. This and a constantly moving camera, rapid editing that often cuts from close-ups to wides, the use of both underwater and drone cameras, and a haunting score, add up to our attempt at Hitchcock’s ideal of an “expressive visual pattern.”

Godard, J. L. (2011). Interviewed by Jean Collet September 12, 1963, in *Pure Cinema? Blanchot, Godard, Le Mepris* by Oliver H. Harris. *Critical Quarterly*, 1 July 2011, p. 71.

Hitchcock, A. (1997). *Direction*. In S. Gottlieb (Ed.), *Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.255–256

Bordwell, D. (2006). *The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in Modern Movies*. 1st ed. University of California Press.



Ross Adrian Williams

Bird Sounds (202 Screen work)

Bird Sounds was created as part of an interdisciplinary research (filmmaking and cognitive psychology) project concerned with off-screen sound and visual memory in narrative film. The primary research question being: do audiences create visual memories of events of objects that were presented with sound alone? This is the first known study that seeks to determine if visual memories might be induced by sound alone in narrative film. The film explores memory and sound in the context of the acceptance of grief. Joel, an environmental sound recordist returns to the jungle in search of echoes of a loss he hasn't yet accepted. In his search memories are triggered and a process begins.

Biography

Dr. Ross Adrian Williams is an Assistant Professor for Sound Design at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. As a sound designer and composer he has contributed to creative works across a range of mediums from traditional narrative film, installation and VR. His research focus concentrates on sound for film and animation, more specifically sound and image memory as well infrasound for VR implementation. *Bird Sounds* is his directorial debut.

Arezou Zalipour

Video Essay Making with Intent (presentation)

Biography

Arezou Zalipour is an Associate Professor in Screen Production and Cultural Studies at the Department of Screen, Audio and Journalism at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand. Arezou is the Director of AUT Centre for Screen Practice Research (SPR@AUT). In 2022 she completed directing and producing a short documentary *Shama*, and co-writing of a feature length drama screenplay with an award-winning international writer-director that will go to production in 2024. Arezou's profile: <https://academics.aut.ac.nz/arezou.zalipour/about>

Video essays in the world of film scholarship promise to offer a new way of engaging with and analysing films, or intend to lead to new insights and perspectives on the medium. Video essay-making allows film scholars to present their ideas and arguments, interpret a specific aspect of a film, discuss a concept related to film and media, and/or extend their ideas that would otherwise be presented in the form of written scholarship. I am presenting for the panel 'The video essay: Extending Scholarship through Audio-visual Methods', and share my experience of making and teaching video essays in the area of racial and cultural diversity in film practice and reflect on the ways in which the audio-visual work in the place of discourse may enhance or limit academic knowledge-producing and engagement.

Arezou Zalipour & James Nicholson

Shama (2022, screen work)



Biographies

Arezou Zalipour (PhD, UKM; PhD, Waikato) is an Associate Professor at the Department of Screen, Audio and Journalism, Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand, and Director of AUT Centre for Screen Practice Research. Arezou's past research project offered an innovative insight into NZ's film practice through the first conceptualisation of 'Asian New Zealand cinema', and publication of the first book in this area *Migrant and Diasporic Film and Filmmaking in New Zealand* (2019). She is on the New Zealand Film Commission's (NZFC) Industry Leadership Group to advise and work on the development and implementation of NZ's first He Ara Whakaurunga Kanorau Diversity and Inclusion Strategy policy (2022). Last year, she was invited to join a NZ-German co-production for which she co-wrote a feature-length drama screenplay with an award-winning international writer-director that will go to production in 2024.

James Nicholson is former head of the Screen Production department in Auckland University of Technology's School of Communication Studies. He is an experienced cinematographer and editor, whose research has focused on the use of sound in documentary film. James taught Corporate and Community Video at AUT for 15 years and has produced and directed numerous community productions.

For the Sightlines 2023, we present *Shama*, a small-scale documentary and discuss our filmmaking as research approach and the constraints of academic filmmaking with no-budget. The short documentary *Shama* is about Shama Ethnic Women's Trust, one of the first NGOs in New Zealand established and run by ethnic migrant women for ethnic women and their families. Applying a filmmaking-as-research methodology, the project's aim was to respond to the scarcity of screen representation of ethnic NGOs. Given the original objective of promoting awareness of Shama's services, it would have been reasonable to employ the devices of expository documentary to convey information and advocate for the organisation. In this project, however, we wanted to move away from only presenting information but also to convey a sense of the internal culture of the NGO and its community spirit. In the production process, we realised that the community production strategies we adopted facilitated a locus for experimenting with five levels of performance. In this presentation we discuss the strategies that we used to enhance collaborative community documentary practice and the five levels of performance we designed to convey the spirit of Shama NGO.

Shama was in the 2022 official selection of five international film festivals including the winner of two Best Women Empowerment Film awards.

Our article in the *Journal of Media Practice*.

Credits

Sightlines Organising and Selection Committee

Kath Dooley
Michael Bentham
Kim Munro
Saige Walton

Research Assistant and Event Coordinator

Kaya Blum

Program Design

Celine Callander

Special thanks to

Pieter Aquilla

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Catherine Gough-Brady

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Patrick Kelly


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The Mercury Cinema

Michael Sergi

Simon Weaving

Tom Young



Note: The creative works and papers for presentation were selected following a double peer review process.