

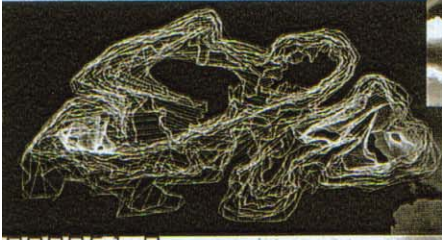
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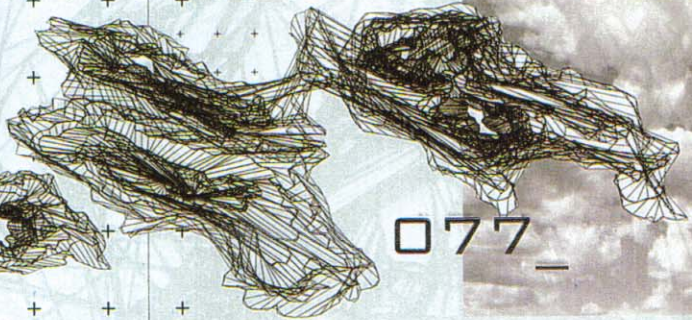
Raxworthy, Julian R. (2004) *Informe*. Kerb, 13. pp. 66-67.

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Much landscape architectural form seems like hackneyed modernism, whether it be orthogonal or biomorphic, 'formal or informal' and doesn't seem to get to grips with the truly complex nature of the landscape, making any project seem potentially simplistic. This is largely because it has inherited languages from architecture that are based around objects, and that therefore can act to make designs self-referential rather than edgy instances in a dialogue much larger than the site itself, connected to systems that are unavoidable, even if one chooses to ignore them. These systems constitute a formal language even if landscape architecture looks to things like GIS to engage with them. Tropospheric Temperament was an Advanced Computing subject, for second-year landscape architecture students at UWA, taught by Julian Raxworthy and Rene Van Meeuwen, which ran in Semester 1, 2004. For this subject, the question was: how can we learn to wield such systems in design terms, even if they are developed through un-self-conscious natural and vernacular forces?

The brief for the semester's project was as follows:

Design and realise an exhibition that demonstrates, in real time, the relationship between local cloud formations and larger meteorological systems and patterns, which registers the resonance between those aerial formations and specific local, cultural horizon conditions, utilising a combination of digital and manual representations, together with static and dynamic display mechanisms, that finally demonstrates key differences between a landscape and an architectural language of form.

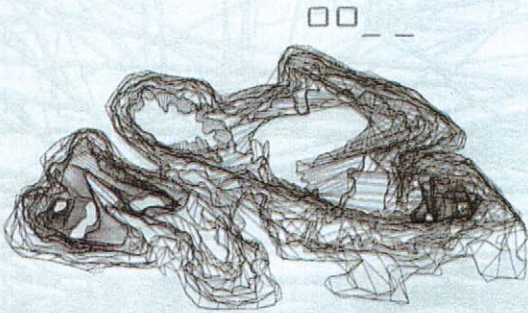
The subject culminated with an exhibition event on the evening of 27th May, 2004, in, and immediately outside, the Cullity Gallery, at UWA. It comprised a series of exhibits that each dealt with different aspects of the above brief, which engaged the viewer on their path through the exhibition, starting on approach from outside the gallery, the material of which was drawn from simultaneous documentation of an 'atmospheric period' of two hours. All exhibits in some way represented that material, and were synchronised with each other, so that the viewer could see multiple aspects of the same cloud formation/atmosphere. The following descriptions and frames from video track a person's path through the exhibition.

Outside

A fine wall of water mist, across the entry of the gallery, onto which was projected a video of the shadows cast by clouds, inverting the traditional relationship of a cloud figure, on a blue background. On certain cloud configurations, the meteorological names of formations were also superimposed. Clouds at night, shadows and projection on water mist were all layers of relevance nested within the piece.

Inside Outside

This exhibit examined the relationship between what was happening in the external environment, and how this affected what was happening inside, by filming the inside and outside of a city building, simultaneously when it started to rain. This exhibit was placed just inside the entry to the exhibition, negotiating itself between



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inside and out, and comprised two TVs with the videos of in and out, and a monitor between them that showed the paths of people relationally.

The World

While we are told about the movement of pressure systems on the evening news, there is an abstractness involved in truly understanding their implications at a local scale. This exhibit comprised a projected model of the world onto which the actual cloud patterns for the period were displayed, together with another projection of the same patterns at a larger scale in Australia. The information for both was gathered from national and international on-line meteorology sites, another abstraction, considering the a-geographical nature of the site. This exhibit provided an empirical background for the time period of the exhibition.

Builders

As well as being huge atmospheric entities, clouds are still demonstrations of basic physics and gas chemistry, as the Builders' group explored. Establishing a deliberately camp science experiment, complete with safety glasses and lab coats, this group demonstrated how clouds can be made, using a Cola-Cola bottle, smoke and pressure, showing that clouds work at scale. The exhibit was projected, with the audience watching on couches, and was accompanied by explanatory brochures.

Chasers

Like Don Quixote lancing at windmills, the Chasers followed one particular cloud formation throughout the city, by car. In the sky, there are no benchmarks, or datums, against which to judge the nature of clouds, either

their size or relative form, something we realise when we fly through clouds. Correspondingly the Chasers group used the differing horizons of the city to progressively monitor the shape of the cloud. The exhibit was projected, with a map on a monitor, showing their progress through the city in the street directory.

Painters

Two paintings by prominent Perth artists Penny Bovell and Kevin Robertson were also included in the exhibition, a medium that has almost become a defacto standard for engaging the subjective sense of clouds as a type of 'temperament', of reading the feel of an atmosphere. The 'arts' are, in a sense, another form of benchmark, institutionalised with the task of representing subjectivity.

Documenters

In contrast to the ephemeral qualities that paintings of clouds might attempt to engage, and indeed all the projection in the exhibition, this exhibit comprised three-dimensional computer models of cloud forms, from which technical drawings were produced in AutoCAD. It begged the question – if one had to produce a documentation package for a cloud, how would one begin to describe its geometry? Since there is an economy in a documentation process, perhaps to describe clouds we must do it by anthropomorphising them, comparing them to things we know.

Sound

Meteorological systems affect us across all our senses, not just seeing clouds in the sky with our eyes, blowing smells to our noses; moistening and drying our skin; making us shiver and sweat; filling our ears with the sound of the wind.

This exhibit had no visual component, but rather comprised the sound of the wind from the two-hour period, heard at the top of the ANA building, the tallest in Perth, sequenced and played with 5.1 surround sound. Spliced into it also were voice grabs from news and radio forecasts of the same period, another means of representing the weather.

The subject was project based, working from the premise that at an 'advanced' level, computer users should find ways to do what they need to do, rather than let the foibles of software direct the end product. The subject attempted to blend theory, representation, design discussion and computer technology, rather than being strictly skills based. This blend was both the most interesting and most difficult part of the subject, with students expecting more direct computer instruction, while the lecturers wished to enable students to be able to work out what they needed to know of computers, on the basis of what the problem required.

TROPOSPHERIC TEMPERAMENT CREDITS

Lecturers:

Julian Raxworthy and Rene Van Meeuwen

'Outside' Group:

Alexandra Gaunt, Barbara Kletnieks, Andrea Tate and Luke van den Hoek

'Inside/Outside' Group:

Shea Hatch, Richard Treanor and Fleur Rees

'World' Group:

Cara Clifton, Ida Grjotheim and Zoe Williamson

'Builders' Group:

Sarah Bevan, Anna Duncan, Timothy Gee and Elyan Sarhouryeh

Artists:

Penny Bovell and Ivin Robertson

'Chasers' Group:

Angela FitzGibbon, Sarah Ryan, Carly Steinepreis and Cally Edwards

'Documenters' Group:

Donna Broun, Emily Buck and Ailsa Grieve

'Sound' Group:

Joel Bergen, Andrew Harvey, Timothy Nichols and Andrew Thomas