



# Academic Conference 2020

*21st Century Screen Media: Ruptures and Continuities*

## PROGRAM

4-5 December

The WA Art Gallery Theatre  
Perth Cultural Centre  
Perth Western Australia



Proudly presented by Curtin University's School of Media, Creative Arts & Social Inquiry

Conference Convenors: Dr Kath Dooley and Dr Antonio Traverso

*We acknowledge the Wadjuk people of the Nyungar nation as the traditional owners of country on which Curtin University's Bentley campus and The WA Art Gallery stand. We acknowledge their continuing connection to land, sea and community and pay our respects to them and their culture, and to Elders, past and present.*

## CONFERENCE INFORMATION

### Where

The WA Art Gallery Theatrette, Perth Cultural Centre, Perth WA 6000

### When

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, 9am – 5.30pm

### Conference Website

<https://www.revelationfilmfest.org/academic-conference>

### Conference Registration

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/revelation-academic-dec-4-5-registration-119207886999>

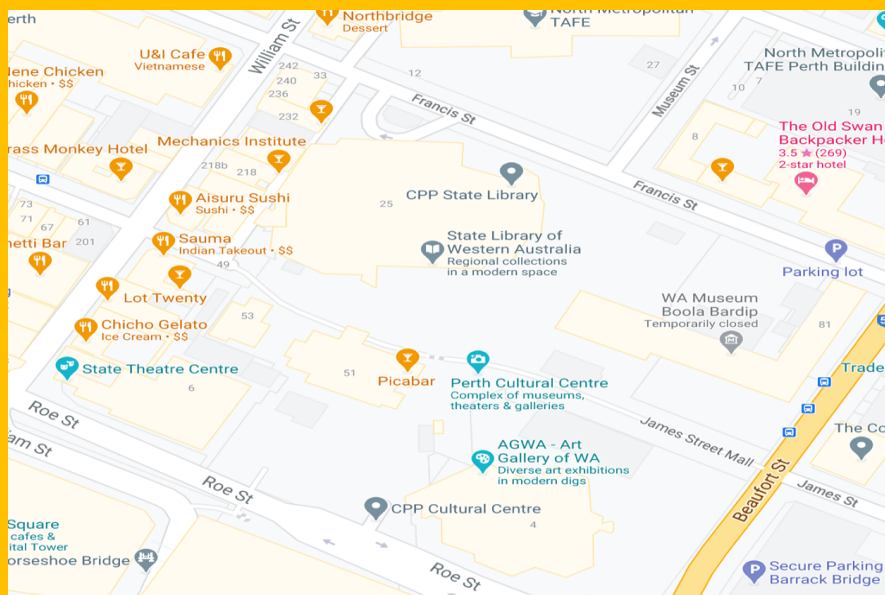
Lunch and morning/afternoon tea served in the Gallery Café, located within the precinct of the WA Art Gallery

Drinks served at PICA (Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts), located a few steps from the WA Art Gallery within the Perth Cultural Centre area

Toilets/Disability Toilets located near the WA Art Gallery's main entrance

Remote access to sessions available through ZOOM (see links on Conference Website)

Please arrive at each session (whether in person or online) at least 10 minutes in advance



Perth Cultural Centre, Perth City (source: google maps)

DAY 1 Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> December		
Time	Session	Speakers
9am-9.30am	Welcome and introduction	Convenors: <b>Kath Dooley</b> and <b>Antonio Traverso</b>
9.30am-10.30am	Session 1: Keynote	<b>Cathy Henkel</b> (WA Screen Academy) Can Impact Documentaries Really Make an Impact?
10.30am-11am	MORNING TEA	
11am-12.30pm	Session 2 New Documentaries Chair: Antonio Traverso	<b>Cassandra Dana</b> (University of Colorado) Documentary Ethics and Criminal Justice Reform in <i>The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst</i> PRE-RECORDED  <b>Magali McDuffie</b> (SAE, Perth) Resistance, Empowerment and Social Change: Collaborative Film and Speaking Back in a 21st Century Neo-Colonial World  <b>Michelle Johnston</b> (Curtin University) <b>Mignon Shardlow</b> (Notre Dame University) <i>Earthship Freo</i> : Exploring Interactive Documentary as a Tool for Democracy and Community Engagement
12.30pm-2pm	LUNCH	
2pm-3.30pm	Session 3 New Fictions of Science Chair: Kath Dooley	<b>Wendy Haslem</b> (University of Melbourne) The Rupture of the Blue LIVE ONLINE  <b>Justin Rotolo</b> (Massey University) Digitised Engines of Production: Technology as Subject and Tool in the Development of Fantasy-Based Narratives LIVE ONLINE  <b>Kirsten Hudson</b> (Curtin University) <i>Requiem (Kalyakoorl)</i> Short Film Screening & Meet the Filmmaker
3.30pm-4pm	AFTERNOON TEA	
4pm-5.20pm	Session 4 Panel Chair: Antonio Traverso	<b>Fernanda Peñaloza</b> (University of Sydney) <b>Kirsten Stevens</b> (University of Melbourne) <b>Tess Van Hemert</b> (Queensland University of Technology) The Growth of Film Streaming and Film Festivals in Australia LIVE ONLINE
5.30pm	Drinks at Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts	

DAY 2 Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> December		
Time	Session	Speaker/s
9am-10.30am	Session 5 Immersive Cinemas Chair: Antonio Traverso	<b>Kath Dooley</b> (Curtin University) Exploring Viewer Positioning in a Cinematic Virtual Reality Documentary: A Creative Research Project  <b>Adam Fish</b> (University of New South Wales) Crash Theory LIVE ONLINE  <b>Guy Lobwein</b> (Queensland University of Technology) Subverting Spectacle: Contemporary Visual Art Practices, VR and Militainment PRE-RECORDED
1030am-11am	MORNING TEA	
11am-12pm	Session 6 Liminal Cinemas I Chair: Kath Dooley	<b>Laurent Shervington</b> (University of Western Australia) Wim Wenders and the Valence of Hollywood  <b>Catherine Gough-Brady</b> (Snodger Media) Stella Bruzzi Interrupted (5-minute provocation) PRE-RECORDED  <b>Brenton Mark Rossow</b> (Edith Cowan University) The Anthropocosmic and the Anthropocentric Perspective in the Films of Chen Kaige and Werner Herzog
12pm-1.30pm	LUNCH	
1.30pm-3pm	Session 7 Smartphone Cinemas Chair: Antonio Traverso	<b>Stefen Harris</b> (Independent Filmmaker) <i>Blue Moon</i> : The Creation of an 86-minute Noir Thriller Movie on iPhone 7+ in One Week with a Budget Better Suited to Purchase a High Mileage Honda Civic PRE-RECORDED  <b>Joachim Strand</b> (Curtin University) <i>Tangerine</i> and Filming on the iPhone: Technological Rupture or the Emperor's New Clothes?  <b>Kerreen Ely-Harper</b> (Curtin University) Towards a Theory and Practice of Creative Mobile Film Production: <i>No Bus</i> – A Case Study in Narrative Drama Produced on the Smartphone
3pm-3.30pm	AFTERNOON TEA	
3pm -5.10pm	Session 8 Liminal Cinemas II Chair: Kath Dooley	<b>Janice Loreck</b> (University of Melbourne) Women and Political Cinema: The Case of <i>Terror Nullius</i> (Soda_Jerk, 2018) LIVE ONLINE  <b>Daniel Berjano</b> (Universidad de Granada) Vampires in Transition LIVE ONLINE  <b>Cory Cribb</b> (University of Melbourne) "To Believe in an Image (Again)": Cinema, Ontology and the Cure for Digital Scepticism
5.10-5.20pm	Final Remarks & Closing of Conference	
5.30pm	Drinks at Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts	

## ABSTRACTS & BIOS

### SESSION 1

#### Keynote

### Can impact documentaries really make an impact?

Associate Professor Cathy Henkel (WA Screen Academy)

#### Abstract

The human species is facing an unparalleled crisis as a perfect storm of climate change, wildlife extinctions, aging and over population and battles for the planet's limited resources hit with unprecedented force. The urgency of these issues has been called out by scientists, academics, social and environmental groups for decades, but we have collectively ignored the warnings. The Australian bushfires and extinctions in the summer of 2019/2020 are indicative of what lies ahead. A parallel issue is the aging population, the medicalisation of death and the mental health and suffering of the elderly. Many wish to leave the planet at this time and to die on their own terms, but the medical authorities and most state legislations do not allow them this right. What will it take for humans to fully wake up to the global emergency and force the changes necessary to manage the crisis unfolding, avert further effects and create a more humanist, compassionate social fabric? Can documentary films, in particular impact documentaries, play a significant role in raising awareness, be transformative and bring about real world changes in critical issues? This presentation will explore these questions by considering two case studies: the 2008 film *The Burning Season*, exploring the impact of forest fires in accelerating climate change, and the author's latest work, *Laura's Choice*, exploring three generations of women coming to terms with a radical approach to dying.

#### Biography

Dr Cathy Henkel is Director of the WA Screen Academy at ECU and an award-winning documentary producer/director/writer. Her credits include *The Burning Season*, *The Man Who Stole my Mother's Face* and *Show me the Magic*. Her awards include Best Documentary at Tribeca Film Festival, two IF awards, an EMMY nomination and SPA Documentary Producer of the Year.

## SESSION 2

### New Documentaries

#### **Documentary Ethics and Criminal Justice Reform in *The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst***

Cassandra Dana (University of Colorado)

##### **Abstract**

On March 14, 2015, Robert Durst was arrested in a New Orleans hotel room on murder charges stemming from a 15-year-old cold case. The arrest was made mere hours before the final episode of HBO's *The Jinx*, a true-crime docuseries featuring Durst, was aired. This paper focuses on the ethical implications of documentarian vigilantes and the impact of *The Jinx* on American criminal justice reform. The paper argues that director Andrew Jarecki negates the search for truth and subsequently disavows his ethical obligation to both the subject and viewer. The docuseries utilises misleading audio, reenactments and a lack of character identification to convince viewers of Durst's murderous tendencies. The HBO docuseries provides little information on the workings of the criminal justice system, perpetuates fear of crime and dissuades trust in the legislative processes. The paper engages Bill Nichols's assessment of ethical obligations for documentarians, as well as Jessica Silbey's exploration of video as evidence. It employs Richard Fox, Robert Van Sichel and Thomas Steigar's theories of tabloid justice in order to determine the implications of true-crime docuseries, specifically as it pertains to *The Jinx*. This type of popular culture blurs the line between documentarian, investigator and journalist drawing the ethics and efficacy of audience 'jurification' into question. *The Jinx* epitomises this tension as Jarecki attempts to establish himself as a credible watchdog for the American criminal justice system.

##### **Biography**

Cassandra Dana is a Media student at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her return to academia came following time spent working in the film festival industry. Dana's current research focuses on reception in the context of exhibition environments and the effects of popular culture on institutional practices.

## **Resistance, Empowerment and Social Change: Collaborative Film and Speaking Back in a 21st Century Neo-Colonial World**

Magali McDuffie (Perth SAE)

### **Abstract**

After fifteen years of collaborative filmmaking with Aboriginal communities around Australia, the author reflects on her journey of media “actionism” (Poelina & Hagan, 2012) and the role of film in resisting dominant discourses. Centered in Country, and privileging the voices of Aboriginal people, these collaborative films have a strong participatory, emancipatory, and Indigenist design. Agency, community development aspirations, cultural actions, and self-determination, within an increasingly neo-colonial context, have been recurrent themes in these screen works. Exposing the hidden flaws of an often exclusively market-oriented capitalist economy, of rushed development schemes hurried through without consultation, or simply privileging alternative voices and stories from the ground, these films make marginalised Indigenous voices visible, and enable Aboriginal communities to speak back and to become an important part of a global Indigenous discourse on development alternatives. Showcased in national and international conferences, film festivals, online, in research papers, or on television, these collaborative films are anchored in a process of deep listening (“likarra”), slow reveal (“kalara”) (McDuffie, 2019), and respectful and reciprocal long-term collaborations and relationships with people and Country. This presentation will use short film excerpts to take the audience through a journey of political and cultural actions throughout Australia, and will discuss the author’s recent work with the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council in the Kimberley, as well as the collaborative online interview series *On Australian Shores*, which recently forced the Western Australian government to re-examine a forgotten injustice.

### **Biography**

Dr Magali McDuffie has been working with Aboriginal communities across Australia for the past fifteen years as an independent filmmaker, researcher, advocate and educator. She is currently Head of the Film Department at SAE Creative Institute, Perth, and SAE National Film Program Committee Chair ([www.magalimcduffie.com](http://www.magalimcduffie.com)).

## ***Earthship Freo*: Exploring Interactive Documentary as a Tool for Democracy and Community Engagement**

Michelle Johnston (Curtin University)

Mignon Shardlow (Notre Dame University)

### **Abstract**

*Earthship Freo* is an interactive documentary work in progress. It is a research project that aims to understand how best to engage and inform a community/audience about sustainability and community development projects. It also explores the impact of the fragmented narrative that is a feature of interactive documentary, and how different participatory elements can work as an alternative to conventional storytelling for engaging an audience. Many Perth people know of the squat houses that, until recently, were located on High Street at the end of Stirling Highway in Fremantle. The Main Roads Department owned the buildings for many years but various squatters took them over. Five of the houses formed a community called “Earthship Freo”, part activist and part way-house living off-grid without running water or electricity. The houses were demolished in September, 2019. Amongst the squatters were a number of front-line activists who had been “holding space” there as a protest against the proposed destruction of the critically endangered Tuart trees that line High Street. In mid-2019 Main Roads announced that the squatters were to be evicted and so the *Earthship Freo* project team approached the community to record their stories. The initial aim was to explore participatory production practices, and to record a colourful era of Fremantle history. However, over the course of five months of production the project has sprouted in many directions and now includes ideas about community, activism, the trees, homelessness, sustainability, the road widening and the survival of a nearby soup kitchen called ‘FERN’. The mosaic of stories emerging from the project make it ideally suited to the interactive documentary format. But how can interactive documentary be effectively used to engage audiences and communities in such conversations? This paper will discuss challenges faced by the project team as they endeavour to adhere to participatory production practices. It will also create two documentary forms of the same story that will explore alternatives to narrative for engaging an audience.

### **Biographies**

Dr Michelle Johnston is Senior Lecturer in Screen Arts at Curtin University. Her research interests include Community Media, Indigenous Media, Cross-cultural Collaboration, Action Research, Oral History and Documentary Production.

Dr Mignon Shardlow is Senior Lecturer in Communications and Media at Notre Dame University. Dr Shardlow is a journalist turned academic with experience in newsrooms from the Republic of Palau in Micronesia to Kununurra in Western Australia, and a few points in between.



## SESSION 3

### New Fictions of Science

#### The Rupture of the Blue

Wendy Haslem (University of Melbourne)

##### Abstract

The coloured version of *Voyage Dans la Lune/Trip to the Moon* (1902) was discovered in 1993 amongst a collection of 200 silent films donated to the Filmoteca de Catalunya in Barcelona. It was restored and the new version premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2011. This version illuminated and refined the watery, pastel colours that were hand painted by unnamed, young female colourists in 1902. This special edition of *Trip to the Moon* also contains brief frozen moments of celluloid that were not able to be salvaged. The reconstruction poses important questions about the status of cinema at pivotal moments that mark turns in the intersected history of film and new media. This presentation asks: how do newer technologies, particularly those used in digital restoration, impact on the original print? Is colour restored or revived by digital techniques? Is the restoration of *Trip to the Moon* a conservation project, or does it result in the creation of yet another version of the film? This presentation will offer an investigation of processes of restoration and the resulting visions of *Trip to the Moon*. It will show how the new aesthetic that rises to the surface of the 2011 edition highlights the difficulties of returning to the original in restoration. It will also reveal some of the evolving complexities, or inherent contradictions, in film history, illustrated by this significant historical film, one that now resists classification as wholly celluloid, or completely digital.

##### Biography

Dr Wendy Haslem is Senior Lecturer in Screen Studies and Director of the Bachelor of Arts at The University of Melbourne. She is the author of *Melies to New Media: Spectral Projections* (Intellect, 2019), *A Charade of Innocence and Vice: The Gothic Films of the 1940s* (2009) and many articles on early film and digital cinema.

## **Digitised Engines of Production: Technology as Subject and Tool in the Development of Fantasy-Based Narratives**

Justin Rotolo (Massey University)

### **Abstract**

As digital technologies progress, the divide between fantasy and reality narrows with computing devices becoming increasingly pervasive, enabled, and self-aware. This presentation unpacks the role of old and new technologies in the production of “real unrealities” (Otto 2011) and positions digital tools as enablers of a new artistic practice whose production methods are intertwined with the essence of many technological fantasy-based narratives. Audiences seduced by the ubiquitous synthetic imagery of today are witnessing a modern take on Victorian horror theatrical illusionism, while production methods still stem from Fordist production models utilised in early 20th century animation. Using increasingly powerful computers to create ever more realistic synthetic imagery, visual effects practitioners often leverage diverse fields of study to engineer new frameworks and technologies that enable production. Historically, some artistic practices have been aided by the development of new and directly unrelated technologies which are reliant on more “ancient” infrastructures such as electricity and material engineering. The culmination of hundreds of years of development has helped lay the foundation for modern dynamic forms of entertainment primed for mass consumption through today’s diverse and readily accessible screens. Contemporary digital artists look to embrace novel technologies that are not only enabling but defining new production practices. In a seemingly technological serendipity, evolving technologies such as AI are increasingly integral to new production frameworks as they are simultaneously the focus of fictionalised representations within science fantasy-based narratives.

### **Biography**

Justin Rotolo leverages digital production techniques with a traditional artmaking practice to challenge the potentials and exploit the limitations of devices and technologies. Justin has worked in the post-production industry since the late 1990s and currently lectures in the College of the Creative Arts at Massey University in Wellington, New Zealand.

## ***Requiem (Kalyakoorl)***

Kirsten Hudson (Curtin University)

### **Abstract**

*Requiem (Kalyakoorl)* is a four-minute handmade, cameraless 16mm film that chronicles the five-month lifecycle of a field of Everlasting Daisies as they germinate, grow, flower, wither, and then reseed in the film artist's suburban backyard. To make this film, the artist bypassed the photographic process and manipulated the celluloid directly, embracing the physical and conceptual nature of 16mm celluloid, particularly its relationship with time, decay and death. She cinematically captured the embodied botanical birth/death/rebirth cycle by initially burying 16mm film stock in the soil with the seeds, and over the course of their lifecycle, resurrected 24 frames of film every day and collaged directly onto the soil-affected celluloid the *Rhodanthe chlorosephala ssp. rosea* at various stages of development: seeds, sprouts, leaves, petals, pollen. Film stock was also attached to stems as they grew, capturing critters, soil and other vibrant matter, as they wove their way through and over the plants, inadvertently becoming entangled into active, sensuous, collaborative agents in the filmmaking process. *Requiem (Kalyakoorl)* is the recent winner of the 2020 inaugural York Botanic Art Prize, which attracts a cash prize of \$7,500, hosted by Gallery 152 in York, Western Australia (<http://gallery152.com.au/>). This presentation includes the screening of the short film, followed by Q&A with the filmmaker.

### **Biography**

Dr Kirsten Hudson is a trans-disciplinary artist who creates film, performance, and object-based works that visually register, perform, or speculate upon, human, non-human, and other-than-human experience and embodiment. Currently working with the increasingly obsolete medium of 16mm celluloid, Hudson creates handmade cameraless films compiled from found footage, clear/coloured leader, and other affected filmstock. She is also a Screen, Photography, Art, and Cultural Studies academic/researcher at Curtin University.

## SESSION 4

### Panel: The Growth of Film Festivals and Film Streaming in Australia

#### "Whose Latin American Cinema?" SBS and Latin American Film Festivals in Australia

Fernanda Peñaloza (University of Sydney)

##### Abstract

As Manuel Betancourt states in an article from which the title of this paper derives: "the push to talk about Latin American cinemas [...] carries within it a call to consider alongside it a plurality of audiences" (2016). In Australia, such audiences are found not only in the Film Festival circuit but also on SBS television. This paper explores the conditions that produce the experience of watching Latin American films in Australia as pertaining to a global phenomenon, whereby, as Betancourt points out, we are witnessing a diversification of audiences, which, in turn, implies a diversification of circulation sites. Yet Australian audiences and Latin American film circuits in Australia are usually excluded from broader Latin American cinema scholarly debates. While most Latin American film scholars focus on the way we "read 'Latin American cinema' as one that is explicitly transnational in a north-south relationship" (Middents, 2013), this paper seeks to problematise the Latin American cinema consumption trajectory by decentering the North-South axis of the Euro/US-Latin America model by paying attention to the exhibition circuits and the cinematic experiences generated within the Australian context.

##### Biography

Dr Fernanda Peñaloza is Senior Lecturer of Latin American Studies at the University of Sydney. She is currently working on a monograph provisionally entitled *Southern Cinemas: Latin American Film Circulation in Australia*. Her latest book publication (co-edited with Sarah Walsh) is *Mapping South-South Connections: Australia and Latin America* (2019).

## **In Support of Australian Feature Films: The Function and Friction of Festivals in the Digital Age**

Kirsten Stevens (University of Melbourne)

### **Abstract**

Film Festivals play an important role in the script-to-screen value chain of national feature film production. For many films, festivals represent key sites for sourcing development financing and represent alternative spaces for their exhibition and circulation (de Valck 2007). For some films, festivals also help to open avenues to more traditional distribution and act to create buzz that sustains and advances their ability to capitalise in a range of exploitation markets (theatrical, DVD, television). Yet as online distribution technologies and particularly Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) providers disrupt the legacy script-to-screen value chain model, collapsing exploitation markets and contingent forms of pre-financing, the roles festivals play also shift, with them becoming at once important bellwethers of independent and national feature film production yet also increasingly in conflict with new forms of film financing, distribution and evaluation. This paper examines the shifting role of film festivals and international film markets in the context of advancing SVOD disruption of the script-to-screen value chain. It approaches this topic along three key lines of inquiry: i) the disruption of festivals and markets as key sites in negotiating feature film development financing; ii) the impact of SVOD acquisitions on the flow of content for festivals to program; and iii) the nature of festival programming, which remains closely aligned to categories of national cinema in contrast to SVOD providers that work to devalue and often obscure the nationality of content. In looking at these three aspects, the paper considers the ongoing function of festivals in a changing global media environment. Taking the case of Australian feature film production, the paper further considers what role festivals play in supporting national feature filmmaking as both a material process and as a critical category. It argues that while the broader ecologies of media production may be shifting, festivals will remain key sites in supporting national industries and in particular the development of feature films as a distinct form of storytelling.

### **Biography**

Kirsten Stevens is Lecturer in Arts and Cultural Management at the University of Melbourne. Author of *Australian Film Festivals: Audience, Place and Exhibition Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), her research explores the impacts of digital technology and the influence of film festivals and film culture events within national screen industries.

# **Are We Still Watching? Engagement with Australian Film Festivals in the Digital Era**

Tess Van Hemert (Queensland University of Technology)

## **Abstract**

Ongoing changes in the global distribution landscape have disrupted the international film festival network. The widespread success of streaming services, shortening of distribution windows and increased demand for niche content have changed the way screen content is developed, distributed and consumed (Iordanova and Cunningham, 2012). This has disrupted the role of international film festivals within the industry, and yet, film festivals continue to adapt and endure. They remain significant to global distribution and exhibition and provide a unique environment to screen a film. In Australia, the most visible film festivals are clustered around urban centres, yet there is a flourishing network of film festivals outside of major cities. In the state of Queensland, these festivals in regional and rural areas provide crucial visibility for the industry, local community and emerging filmmakers. However, given the additional pressures festivals now face with the popularity of streaming services and changing audience tastes, developing new strategies for engaging and sustaining an audience is more important than ever. This paper draws on the findings of a project which maps the film festival landscape in Queensland. It examines the distinct cinematic experiences offered by film festivals in urban, regional and rural locations, and the important role they play in developing local screen culture. The paper also considers the challenge film festivals face in continuing to foster the live, communal experience unique to a film festival environment, and finding meaningful ways to attract audiences in an increasingly competitive era for screen content.

## **Biography**

Dr Tess Van Hemert is Lecturer in Media and Entertainment Industries at Queensland University of Technology. Her current areas of research include global screen distribution and exhibition, and gender equality and diversity in the screen industry, with a particular focus on international film festivals and emerging women's cinema.

## SESSION 5 Immersive Cinemas

### Exploring Viewer Positioning in a Cinematic Virtual Reality Documentary: A Creative Research Project

Kath Dooley (Curtin University)

#### Abstract

*Impact: Beyond the Night Sky* is a cinematic virtual reality (CVR) documentary, written and directed by Kath Dooley between 2019 and 2020, which presents the life and work of Perth-based planetary scientist Dr Katarina Miljkovic. Including actuality footage, dramatised recreations and animated sequences sourced from NASA and other space agencies, this project recalls the moments that inspired Miljkovic on her vocational path while also examining impacts and collisions between bodies in our solar system. This paper interrogates the notion of viewer positioning for the CVR documentary. This concerns the role that is created for the viewer, as silent observer, witness or participant who is addressed in first-person by characters. The paper argues that careful consideration of viewer positioning can foster memorable experiences for the viewer by mentally transporting them into the world of the subject, where cinematic moments unfold in real time. The paper will examine this area with reference to the writing and direction of this creative research project, exploring how *Impact: Beyond the Night Sky* allows the viewer to relive Miljkovic's memories as a subjective experience. The documentary's narrative plays out in the first-person tense, with the aim of bringing the viewer into her diegetic universe, on Earth and among the stars.

#### Biography

Dr Kath Dooley is a filmmaker and academic in the Discipline of Theatre, Screen and Immersive Media at Curtin University. She is author of the monograph *Cinematic Virtual Reality - A Critical Study of 21st Century Approaches and Practices* (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming 2021) and co-editor of *The Palgrave Handbook of Screen Production* (2019). Dr Dooley has written a number of short and feature-length screenplays, and has directed several award-winning short screen works. Her research interests include screen production methodology for traditional and immersive media, screenwriting and screen education.

## Crash Theory

Adam Fish (University of New South Wales)

### Abstract

It is a crisis. We create mass extinction, massacre the inhabitants of the oceans, annihilate the forests, and overheat the planet. We know this by observing the Earth from above. Atmospheric technologies—satellites, balloons, and drones—witness this global catastrophe. And like all human creations these atmospheric technologies are flawed. They regularly fail and fall from the sky. Yet, despite these fiascos, atmospheric technologies provide a chance to counter disaster. But what connects failing technologies and a collapsing world? *Crash Theory* is a documentary by Adam Fish that investigates the entanglements of disintegrating ecologies, tumbling drones, and human interventions. This 45-minute video provides a first-person account of drones monitoring erupting volcanoes, palm oil plantations, and coral reefs in Indonesia; marauding elephants in Sri Lanka; starving orcas in the United States; rhinos in the United Kingdom; and internet infrastructure in Iceland. It asks: What is the relationship between life, loss, and survival technologies? The video advances two interconnected concepts. On the one hand is drone justice, the use of drones for extending life. On the other hand is crash theory, the hard realities of technological failure and ecological deterioration. Drone justice and crash theory are linked by broken world thinking that asks us to care for and heal a world that is falling apart (link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEj8ECbBJe8>).

### Biography

Adam Fish is a cultural anthropologist, documentary video producer, and interdisciplinary scholar at the University of New South Wales. He has authored three books including *Hacker States* (2020 MIT Press, with Luca Follis), *Technoliberalism* (2017 Palgrave Macmillan), and *After the Internet* (2017 Polity Press, with Ramesh Srinivasan).



## **Subverting Spectacle: Contemporary Visual Art Practices, VR and Militainment**

Guy Lobwein (Queensland University of Technology)

### **Abstract**

This paper describes a practice-led research project that uses virtual reality (VR) technology in a contemporary art practice context to creatively and critically investigate spectacle through auto-ethnography, satire and the glitch. In this research project, processes and methods for micro-budget VR development are explored in relation to VR installations that arise out of the researcher's affective relationship with military entertainment or "militainment", such as military-based games and films, that cultural theorist Roger Stahl refers to as the "military-entertainment-complex" (2006). With the more recent proliferation of consumer-grade VR technology, creative practice has been afforded new opportunities to respond to these representations of conflict, prompting questions about the reasons why we watch, play and are entertained by recreations of such horrific experiences. Although VR technology has been used in creative practice for decades, there has been little practice-led research that specifically examines and intersects the relationships between contemporary art, VR, its history as a militaristic technology, and the desire to consume militainment. The paper will discuss how the researcher's VR experiences, in combination with the theoretical terrain of photogrammetry, neo-baroque spatiality and *détournement*, may afford participants new perspectives on the persuasive, social influence of military-screen culture. By applying aspects of satire and slapstick comedy, as well as embracing VR's consistent ability to glitch, this presentation will discuss the intersection between these notions and frame this research project in relation to the work of diverse critical visual artists in this field.

### **Biography**

Guy Lobwein is a Brisbane-based emerging artist currently undertaking his Doctorate in Philosophy at Queensland University of Technology. His research is focused on the use of virtual reality in contemporary art and how it can be used to generate immersive and critically reflective experiences.

## SESSION 6

### Liminal Cinemas I

#### Wim Wenders and the Valence of Hollywood

Laurent Shervington (University of Western Australia)

##### Abstract

This paper considers the relationship between German director Wim Wenders and American popular culture, with particular reference to classical Hollywood cinema. Utilising the theoretical work of Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek, the paper explores the persistent question in Wenders's work of whether Hollywood is fundamentally conservative or radical, a question that leads him into seeing the radical nature of narrative and fantasy. With reference to Wenders's 1973 film *Alice in the Cities*, the paper asserts that in Wenders's early films the influence of American popular culture (and by proxy Hollywood) was engaged with only on a minimal level, retaining a critical distance through consistent jabs to its overly commercial nature. However, after the five-year production of his Hollywood-based film *Hammett*, the German director discovered that the radicality of Hollywood resided within the conventions of narrative, and the ensuing recourse to fantasy that it entailed. This paper argues against the standard position that *Hammett* was merely an outlier in the career of Wenders, seeing it rather as the key to the director's re-orientation from non-narrative to narrative form. While such an embrace of narrative was initially rejected, as seen in the films *The State of Things* and *Lightning Over Water*, where the Hollywood studio system is denounced even more than before as oppressive and all-encompassing, this paper claims that it was *Paris, Texas*, the film that followed *Hammett*, that marked Wenders's acceptance of the inexorable influence of Hollywood in his work.

##### Biography

Laurent Shervington is a young academic living in Maylands, Western Australia, who was educated at the University of Western Australia, achieving both a Bachelor and Honours degree, First Class accreditation, and the Most Outstanding Dissertation Award. Laurent's PhD thesis focuses on how psychoanalytic theory can be useful to theorise the emergence of New Wave Cinema.

## **Stella Bruzzi Interrupted**

(5-minute provocation)

Catherine Gough-Brady (Snodger Media)

### **Abstract**

Stella Bruzzi talks about performativity (as opposed to performance) in documentary, and how a documentary is a triangular relationship between the filmmakers, the subjects being filmed and the audience. She is then interrupted by the off-camera hotel manager, who shuts down the filming. Sara Ahmed proposes an idea of character consistency; that consistency informs what it is to be out of character. This provocation proposes that not only are documentary characters consistent internally, they are consistent with the narrative. The interruption by the hotel manager only makes the cut because his character performs actions that fit within the intention of the narrative.

### **Biography**

Catherine Gough-Brady is an award-winning producer and director of six ABC TV documentary series, who has also created 11 radio features for ABC Radio National. Her work has been funded by various organisations including Film Victoria, Seoul Film Commission and the Australia Council and she is currently a PhD candidate at RMIT.

## **The Anthropocosmic and the Anthropocentric Perspective in the Films of Chen Kaige and Werner Herzog**

Brenton Mark Rossow (Edith Cowan University)

### **Abstract**

As Earth's ecosystems wrestle with the effects of the Anthropocene, Tu Weiming, a prominent New Confucian spokesperson, stresses the importance of an anthropocosmic vision that embraces a balanced coexistence between humans, the planet and its lifeforms. Tu describes this anthropocosmic vision as a global view that seeks to embed humans within the cosmic order and connect them with ancient Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian philosophies. In readiness for China's desire to become the new world leader by 2050, the anthropocosmic perspective within New Confucianism is an emerging entity that seeks to connect a broad range of faiths, spiritualities, and interdisciplinary practices that value a sustainable future between humans and the Earth. Anthropocentric worldviews, however, disregard equality and consider humans to be the most important entity in the cosmos, resulting in harmful practices. Fifth-generation Chinese film director Chen Kaige and New German Cinema filmmaker Werner Herzog use similar methods to express anthropocosmic and anthropocentric perspectives in their films. Both directors have emerged from historical periods in which mass environmental destruction and death occurred at the hands of totalitarian regimes in their countries of birth. These tragedies have given Chen and Herzog a deep understanding of the detrimental effects of anthropocentric worldviews and encouraged these directors to explore alternative perspectives. Chen's and Herzog's films reveal a deep reverence for nature, regardless of the cosmos' indifference or hostility toward humanity. This article provides an analysis of the ways in which Chen and Herzog express anthropocosmic and anthropocentric perspectives in their films, affirming that in order to avoid becoming extinct within the era of the Anthropocene, it is vital to respect the cosmos and its creations.

### **Biography**

Brenton Rossow is an interdisciplinary artist. His most recent works include the documentary *Shanghainese Parklife: Cultivating the Taoist Body* and an audiovisual meditation inspired by Taoism and discarded park junk, titled *Clouds and 4 Cigarettes*. Rossow is completing a PhD thesis in Philosophy at Edith Cowan University.

## SESSION 7

### Smartphone Cinemas

#### ***Blue Moon: The Creation of an 86-Minute Noir Thriller Movie on iPhone 7+ in One Week with a Budget Better Suited to Purchase a High Mileage Honda Civic***

Stefen Harris (Independent Filmmaker)

#### **Abstract**

My presentation begins with the screening of a two-minute trailer of *Blue Moon*. The year is 2018 and a police officer in the small New Zealand town of Motueka formed the notion of making a feature film. If I was to make a film on a mobile phone how would it work? I began thinking about a story that takes place in a single location over ninety minutes of real time. Like a one act play, the story of *Blue Moon* begins at 4.20am and finishes at 6.05am. These ruminations were spiralling through my mind as I went about my business as a frontline police officer. It was 4.20 am and I was putting petrol in my patrol car when I glanced back at the gas station. It was lit up like a spaceship in the night, silent, austere and beautiful. Without thinking I took out my police issue iPhone from my Kevlar vest and took a shot. That photograph became the founding document of *Blue Moon*, which could never have been produced without the innovation of the iPhone. No other camera would have delivered the speed and flexibility to complete the film in the available time with the budget. This film could not have been made any other way. *Blue Moon* went on to be selected for numerous international film festivals including Cannes Cinephiles 2020 (link to *Blue Moon's* trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JxmyCH8-ztk>).

#### **Biography**

Stefen Harris's feature drama *The Waimate Conspiracy* (2006) won the Wairoa Maori Film Festival Best Film Award, the Australian Producers Association DigiSPAA Best Film Award, the Canada Dreamspeakers Aboriginal Film Festival Best Feature Film Award, and The New Zealand Screen Award for Best Feature Film. He also won the Air New Zealand Inspiring New Zealander Scholarship in Film to study alongside Martin Campbell (*Casino Royale*, *Zorro*) on the set of Mel Gibson's drama *Edge of Darkness*.

## ***Tangerine* and Filming on The iPhone: Technological Rupture or the Emperor's New Clothes?**

Joachim Strand (Curtin University)

### **Abstract**

The adaptation and utilisation of smartphones as the main technology for recording a feature length drama film is hailed as one of the more significant ruptures from the classical process of film drama production. The comedy-drama *Tangerine* (dir Sean Baker, 2015, USA) is a case in point. Starring non-actors Kiki Rodriguez and Mya Taylor, along with actor James Ransone, the story follows a transgender sex worker who finds out that her boyfriend and pimp has been cheating on her, with a woman. The film gained a great deal of attention, and an immediate seal of indie approval, due to being one of the first feature length dramas shot completely on an iPhone. However, if we consider the history of European filmmaking, particularly the technological and procedural adoptions made as a consequence of the gritty, naturalist aesthetics of Italian neorealism, we may have to reconsider the alleged ground-breaking nature of such a rupture, and rather see it as simply another iteration of required filmmaking selections. This paper will investigate the historical threads connecting the so-called innovation and rupture of shooting a film on the iPhone to the technological and performative requirements of Italian neorealism, in order to explore, firstly, how such a rupture may simply be the emperor's new clothes. Secondly, the paper will address how the re-consideration and proper historical contextualisation of such adapted production process re-iterations can provide fertile grounds for the field of film education, particularly considering the advantages of lo-fi technology for low cost screen production.

### **Biography**

Joachim Strand is a filmmaker, screenwriter and film lecturer whose research focuses on the interaction of cinematic audio and vision. He completed a Masters of Creative Arts in 2006 and is currently a PhD candidate at Curtin University. His PhD thesis explores the screenwriting process and seeks to locate the specific screenplay traits that relate the transference of sound.

# **Towards a Theory and Practice of Creative Mobile Film Production: *No Bus* – A Case Study in Narrative Drama Produced on the Smartphone**

Kerreem Ely-Harper (Curtin University)

## **Abstract**

The smartphone has become one of the most accessible technologies in history dissolving previously held social, economic, geographic and cultural boundaries in media production and communication. Mobile filmmaking is both disruptive and ubiquitous and challenges assumptions and ideologies around traditional film production models and aesthetics. This paper will discuss the use of smart technologies as a form of drama narrative storytelling and media production, examining a number of case study films tracing some of the early forms of mobile camera from the direct cinema movement in the late 1950s through to recent independent and Hollywood smartphone productions where we have seen a rise in fiction films adopting and adapting the new technologies to traditional filmmaking. Drama content producers are more than ever under pressure to work with smaller budgets, limited time and deliver product to market with shorter turnarounds. Steven Soderberg describes shooting on the iPhone as “liberating” (2018). What does he mean? How much of the take up of smartphone filmmaking is driven by economics and expediency versus aesthetics and creative intention? Can the limitations of the iPhone camera pose new opportunities for storytelling? This paper’s author recently addressed these questions during the production of her short film *No Bus*, shot on the iPhone 11 Max Pro. The aim of this paper is therefore to increase our understanding of how the smartphone as a form of semi-automatic filmmaking can contribute to and effect drama narrative forms and stylistic conventions within the cultural context of the films’ examination of power, race and self-preservation.

## **Biography**

Dr Kerreem Ely-Harper is a creative media researcher and practitioner with a background in theatre and film performance, who has created quality screen content with a focus on devising new works, cross-art form production, adaptation, social history, and memory narratives. Her media projects include documentaries, short fiction, dance films, and virtual 3D digital texts. Dr Ely-Harper is Lecturer in Screen Arts at Curtin University, where she teaches screenwriting, and documentary and drama production.

**SESSION 8**  
**Liminal Cinemas II**

**Women and Political Cinema: The Case of *Terror Nullius* (Soda\_Jerk, 2018)**

Janice Loreck (The University of Melbourne)

**Abstract**

What is the state of women's political filmmaking in contemporary cinema? Throughout the twentieth century, women directors created numerous political films that criticised the government and satirised its institutions, from *Daisies* (Věra Chytilová, 1966) to *Wanda* (Barbara Loden, 1970) and *Born in Flames* (Lizzie Borden, 1983). Today, much of women's cinema is deemed political insofar as it explores gender and sexuality. Yet do women still make the other kind of political film—cinema that critiques the state and ruling class? And what strategies distinguish these works from those of the previous century? This paper explores women's political cinema via an analysis of the work of Australian directors Dom and Dan Angeloro, known as Soda\_Jerk. In March 2018, the prestigious Ian Potter Cultural Trust shocked the Australian arts community when it announced it had withdrawn support for Soda\_Jerk's film *Terror Nullius* (2018), allegedly describing the film as "un-Australian". Consisting entirely of repurposed footage from iconic Australian films, *Terror Nullius* offers a provocative example of meta-cinematic commentary, using remix aesthetics to condemn Australia's colonialist past, denounce its leadership and refute national mythologies. This paper positions Soda\_Jerk within a tradition of women's political filmmaking and hypothesises the direction this cinema will take in the twenty-first century.

**Biography**

Dr Janice Loreck is Lecturer in the School of Culture and Communication at The University of Melbourne. She is the author of *Violent Women in Contemporary Cinema* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) and is Festival Coordinator of the Melbourne Women in Film Festival (MWFF). Her recent writings have also appeared in *Australian Humanities Review*, *Science Fiction Film and Television Studies* and *Feminist Media Studies*.



## Vampires in Transition

Daniel Berjano (Universidad de Granada)

### Abstract

In this paper I conduct semiotic analysis of key films of the Spanish Transition. Building off Gilles Deleuze's semiotics (1986, 1989) and Teresa de Lauretis's film theory (1984, 1987), both drawing on Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, I have designed a semiotic model based on the vampire-image. Departing from one of the peripheral meanings of the vampire as a male sexual predator (Rita Segato, 2003), the vampire has been designed as a perverse figuration of structural violence in cybernetic capitalism, which could help us understand the relationship between massive addictive habits of digital machines and Western patriarchal agendas, as studied in the work of Wendy Huy Kyong Chun (2016). Drawing on Teresa de Lauretis (1984) and my own trans-faggot experience, vampire-images are designed to give an account of the processes of simulation that work to erase traces of exploitation. They depart from Gilles Deleuze's time-images of modern cinema (1989), which imply irrational cuts caused by particular relinkages of sound and visual data. In addition, as my analysis of *Elisa, vida mía* (dir Carlos Saura, 1977, Spain) attempts to prove, vampire-images involve icons of women as objectified or subordinated to men. The camera-vampire, particularly outstanding in *Arrebato* (dir Iván Zulueta, 1978, Spain), stands as a tool to capture and observe the effects of vampires. However, its cybernetic design involves a feedback-loop system, which often implies vampiric procedures and habits. Last, by public screenings and debates and practices of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1991), I have aimed at sharing and spreading revolutionary faith.

### Biography

Daniel Berjano (Madrid, 1991), and holds a joint Bachelor degree in Journalism and Film, Media & TV Studies from Universidad Carlos III (Spain). They graduated from the Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies (Utrecht University and Universidad de Granada) in 2018 and they are currently undertaking a doctoral programme in Women's and Gender Studies at Universidad de Granada, Spain.

## **“To Believe in an Image (Again)”: Cinema, Ontology and the Cure for Digital Scepticism**

Cory Cribb (The University of Melbourne)

### **Abstract**

From André Bazin’s “love” for reality, to Stanley Cavell’s “acknowledgement”, the Deleuzian notion of “belief” and Jean-Luc Nancy’s “affirmation of faith”, the ontologist of cinema has time and again maintained that, in so far as cinema abstains from producing knowledge *about* the world, it remains capable of restoring our trust *in* it. For each of the above, cinema is less a matter of communication or signification than a way of seeing, or as Nancy would say, a means “of opening the look to something real”. In the wake of what has been called the “ontological problem of the digital”, along with its identity as a medium, the persistence of cinema’s visionary function has been called into question by a number of scholars who practise what can be called “digital scepticism” by holding that digital cinema – and by extension new media – are somehow guilty of cutting us off from the real. This presentation questions what it might take to restore our belief in the digital image’s rapport with reality, by engaging with Mary Ann Doane’s “politics of the index”, Gregory Flaxman’s critique of “the exigency to show everything”, and Metahaven’s *Digital Tarkovsky*, in which the authors turn to the works and thought of Andrei Tarkovsky while “searching for our own capacities, in a digital sphere, to believe in an image (again)”. Following the latter, this paper argues for a notion of ontological belief that rests not on the technical means of mediation but its capacity to suspend disbelief, that is, to cultivate an investment in the world set before us, irrespective of our capacity to make sense of it.

### **Biography**

Corey Cribb is a PhD candidate in the Department of Screen and Cultural Studies at The University of Melbourne, who specialises in film theory and film-philosophy. Focusing on the film-philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Jean-Luc Nancy, his research interrogates the concept of ontology in film studies as it relates to developments in twentieth-century French thought.

