

# Sightlines: Filmmaking in the academy

**Presented by the Screen Cultures Research Lab**  
School of Media and Communication  
RMIT University



# Sightlines: Filmmaking in the academy

## Welcome from Leo Berkeley Festival Director

This event is designed to showcase the diversity and quality of filmmaking that occurs in the university sector, and the range of ways that filmmaking academics contribute to the development of the film medium. The program contains both films and papers that are exploring new approaches to style and form, that are working to extend and interrogate screen industry practices, that are creative responses to research questions explored in other fields, or inspired by research into theoretical concepts or the work of other film practitioners. The event will have a central focus on the films themselves, as well as considering the ways in which this creative practice can be further developed as a form of academic research. We are very pleased to be able to present Sightlines and hope you enjoy the program.

*Sightlines is presented by the Screen Cultures Research Lab at RMIT University, with the support of the Australian Screen Production Education & Research Association (ASPERA).*

# Opening night

**Date** 23 November 2014  
**Venue** Optic Bar and Studio 1 ACMI,  
Federation Square, Flinders Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
**Time** 6–10 pm

# Main event

**Dates** 24 and 25 November 2014  
**Venue** RMIT Swanston Academic Building  
427–433 Swanston Street  
**Time** 9 am–7.30 pm

# Venues

**Venue 1** 80.01.02 (SAB Cinema)  
**Venue 2** 80.02.03  
**Venue 3** 80.02.02

# WI-FI

**User name** x80312  
**Password** Monday123

# Contact

screencultures.research@rmit.edu.au  
[www.rmit.edu.au/mediacommunication/sightlines](http://www.rmit.edu.au/mediacommunication/sightlines)

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# Quick-look schedule

Sunday, 23 November	
	<b>ACMI Studio—Optic bar, ACMI</b>
<b>6 pm</b>	<b>Welcome drinks</b> Craig Batty and Marsha Berry <b>Book Launch</b>
<b>7 pm</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>7.15 pm</b>	Stuart Bender and Mick Broderick <b>Excursion 20 mins</b> Q&A
<b>8 pm</b>	Joanna Callaghan <b>Love in the Post 80 mins</b> Q&A

## Monday, 24 November

	Venue 1 SAB Cinema (80.01.02)	Venue 2 (80.02.03)	Venue 3 (80.02.02)
<b>9 am</b>	<b>Plenary 1 The identity of the academic film</b>		
<b>10 am</b>	<b>Keynote Ross Gibson</b>		
<b>11 am</b>	<b>Morning Tea</b>		
<b>11.20 am</b>	Kathleen Dooley <b>The Sister 60 mins</b>	<b>Panel</b> Craig Batty, Suya Lee, Louise Sawtell, Stephen Sculley, Stacyl Taylor <b>Developing and writing screenplays for practice-based PhDs 60 mins</b>	Hester Joyce <b>Capture 30 mins</b> Nick Cope <b>Navigating through the practice as research arena—2002–2014 30 mins</b>
<b>12.20 pm</b>	<b>Lunch</b>		
<b>1 pm</b>	Gregory Ferris <b>Notes from The Land 30 mins</b> Angie Black <b>disnature 30 mins</b>	<b>Panel</b> Marilyn Tofler, Jason Bainbridge, Carolyn Beasley, <b>No laughing matter: pitching narrative television comedy while navigating vernacular theory and ethics committees 60 mins</b> Lucy Brown, Lyndsay Duthie <b>Television production: how to make programmes within a commercial and academic context 30 mins</b>	Donna McRae <b>Johnny Ghost 100 mins</b>
<b>2 pm</b>	Andrew Taylor <b>First Person Kodachrome 60 mins</b>	Steve Thomas <b>Reflexivity: The academy and documentary making 30 mins</b>	

	Venue 1 SAB Cinema (80.01.02)	Venue 2 (80.02.03)	Venue 3 (80.02.02)
3 pm	Afternoon Tea		
3.20 pm	<b>Plenary 2</b> The Industry/academy filmmaking relationship		
4.20 pm	Siobhan Jackson <i>Donkey In a Lion's Cage</i> 30 mins	Bettina Frankham <i>How many ways to say you?</i> 60 mins	Annabelle Murphy <i>Reverse adaptation</i> 30 mins
	Paul Fletcher <i>Pop psychology and gridlife</i> 30 mins	Alec McAulay <i>Three Days in Kamakura</i> 40 mins	Kirsi Rinne <i>Experiences and practices of doctoral studies in two Finnish art universities</i> 30 mins
	Robert Hunter Stevenson <i>Animation interrupted</i> 30 mins		Jinghong Zhang <i>Authentic tea? Authentic film narratives?</i> 40 mins
6.30 pm	<b>Keynote 2</b> Robert Connolly in conversation		
Tuesday, 25 November			
9 am	Aaron Burton <i>My Mother's Village</i> 115 mins	Nicholas Hansen <i>Watch-n-Act</i> 30 mins	
9.30 am		Smiljana Glisovic <i>Essayistic spaces and moving image research</i> 30 mins	
10 am		Trish Fitzsimons <i>Time and Tide—The Life of Norman Creek</i> 30 mins Maryanne Jebb <i>Creating dialogue in history through film</i> 30 mins	<b>Spotlight: Film making as social science</b> <b>Panelists:</b> John Moore and Prof Chris Steyaert <b>Convenors:</b> Martin Wood and Laurent Marti
11 am	<b>Morning Tea</b>		
11.20 am	Margot Nash <i>The Silences</i> 105 mins	Andrew O'Keefe <i>Mother's Day</i> 30 mins	
		Darren Mapletoft <i>Submerged</i> 30 mins	
		Iqbal Barkat <i>Community cinema reimagined</i> 30 mins	
1 pm	<b>Lunch</b>		
2 pm	Alex Munt and Justin Harvey <i>Poor Little Rich Girl (after Warhol)</i> 90 mins	Gillian Leahy <i>The Chikukwa project</i> 80 mins	Holly Giesman <i>Eating Cultures</i> 80 mins
3.30 pm	<b>Afternoon tea</b>		
4 pm	<b>Plenary 3</b> The future of academic filmmaking		
5 pm	Event concludes		

## Robert Connolly

**Monday 24th November**  
**6.30pm**

**SAB Cinema**  
**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

Writer, director, producer and recently appointed Adjunct Professor (Media) at RMIT University, Robert is one of Australia's most highly-regarded filmmaking talents, with credits including *The Bank*, *The Boys*, *Three Dollars*, *Balibo*, *Underground: The Julian Assange Story* and *The Turning*. His work has been recognised with numerous awards for film direction, screenwriting and production, including BAFTA and Emmy nominations and Australian Film Institute awards.

With a reputation for thoughtful innovation and a long history of service within the Australian film and television industry, Robert Connolly will be in conversation with Dr Stephen Gaunson of the RMIT Screen Cultures Research Lab.



# Keynote presenters

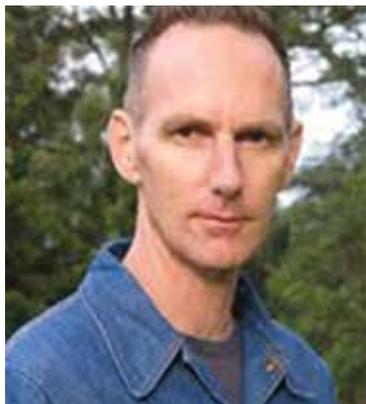
## Ross Gibson

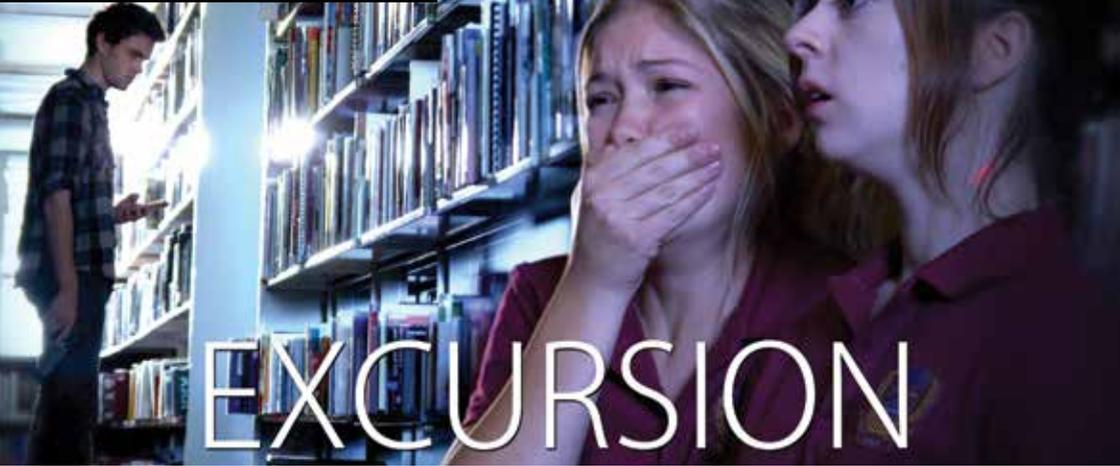
**Monday 24th November**  
**10am**

**SAB Cinema**  
**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

Ross Gibson is a Centenary Professor in Creative & Cultural Research at the University of Canberra. Recent works include *The Summer Exercises* (2009) and *26 Views of the Starburst World* (2012), both books published by UWAP.

**Abstract:** By definition, the work we do as filmmakers in the academy is the work of knowledge-production first and foremost rather than the work of film-production first and foremost. We can, of course, make the knowledge by making the films. But there IS almost always a hierarchy dictated by the academy. How can we best think, define and strategise about this process of making knowledge via creative practice? How can we do this without being in bad faith with both the academy and the medium that we are so committed to?



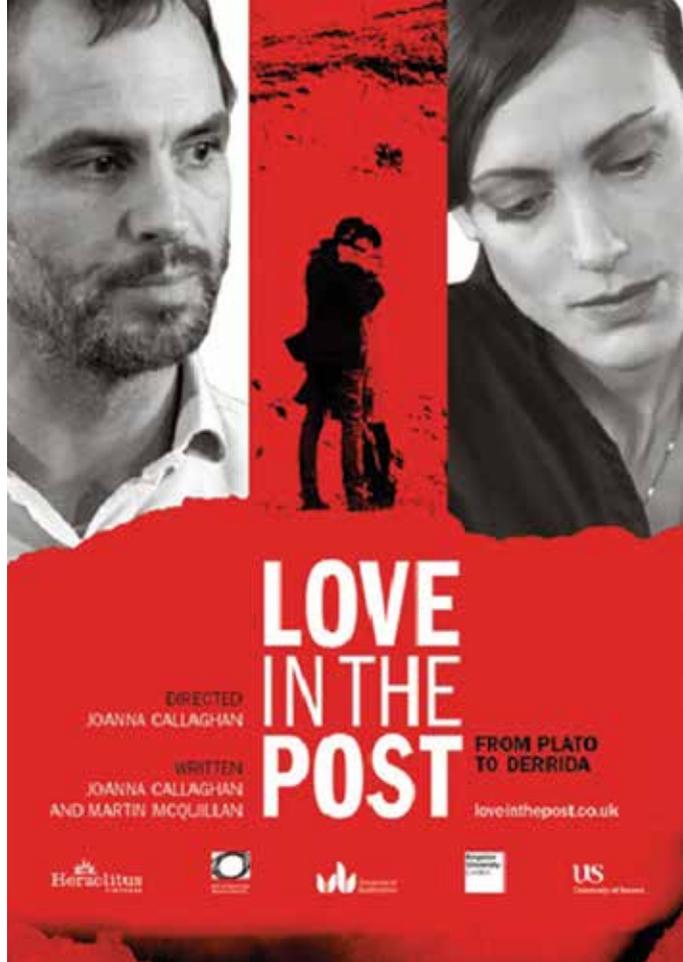


**Excursion (2014)**  
**20 minutes**

**Directed by Stuart Bender**  
**Produced by Stuart Bender**  
**and Mick Broderick**  
**Screenplay by Stuart Bender**  
**and Cristian Broadhurst**  
**Based on an original idea**  
**by Mick Broderick and**  
**Stuart Bender**

Screening followed by Q&A

Trapped inside a university library while on a tour, a group of high school students and their teachers attempt to flee from two relentless killers who prowl the corridors. *Excursion* is a cultural intervention into the current tragedies of school shooting rampages. *Excursion* investigates the extent to which the film could draw upon theoretical research as part of its aesthetic composition while retaining an appeal for mainstream audiences. By using techniques to defamiliarize its representations of screen violence, *Excursion* aims to encourage audiences to consider these tragic events from a fresh perspective; refocusing attention onto the victims and survivors of these mass shootings rather than the emphasis on the killers which often marks stereotypical media representations of these events.



**Love in the Post (2014)**  
80 minutes

**Directed and Produced by**  
**Joanna Callaghan**  
**Written by Joanna Callaghan**  
**and Martin McQuillan**

Love in the Post is inspired by the book *The Post Card* by Jacques Derrida. Like the book, the film plays with fact and fiction, weaving together the stories of a scholar of literature and a film director, alongside insights from critics and philosophers.

Theo Marks works in a university department that is soon to be closed. His wife Sophie, enigmatic and distant, is in analysis. Filmmaker Joanna struggles to complete a film about *The Post Card*. These people are set on a collision course prompted by a series of letters that will change their lives. The film features a never before seen interview with Derrida, alongside contributions from Geoff Bennington, J. Hillis Miller, Sam Weber, Catherine Malabou and Ellen Burt.

# Plenary sessions

## 1: The identity of the academic film

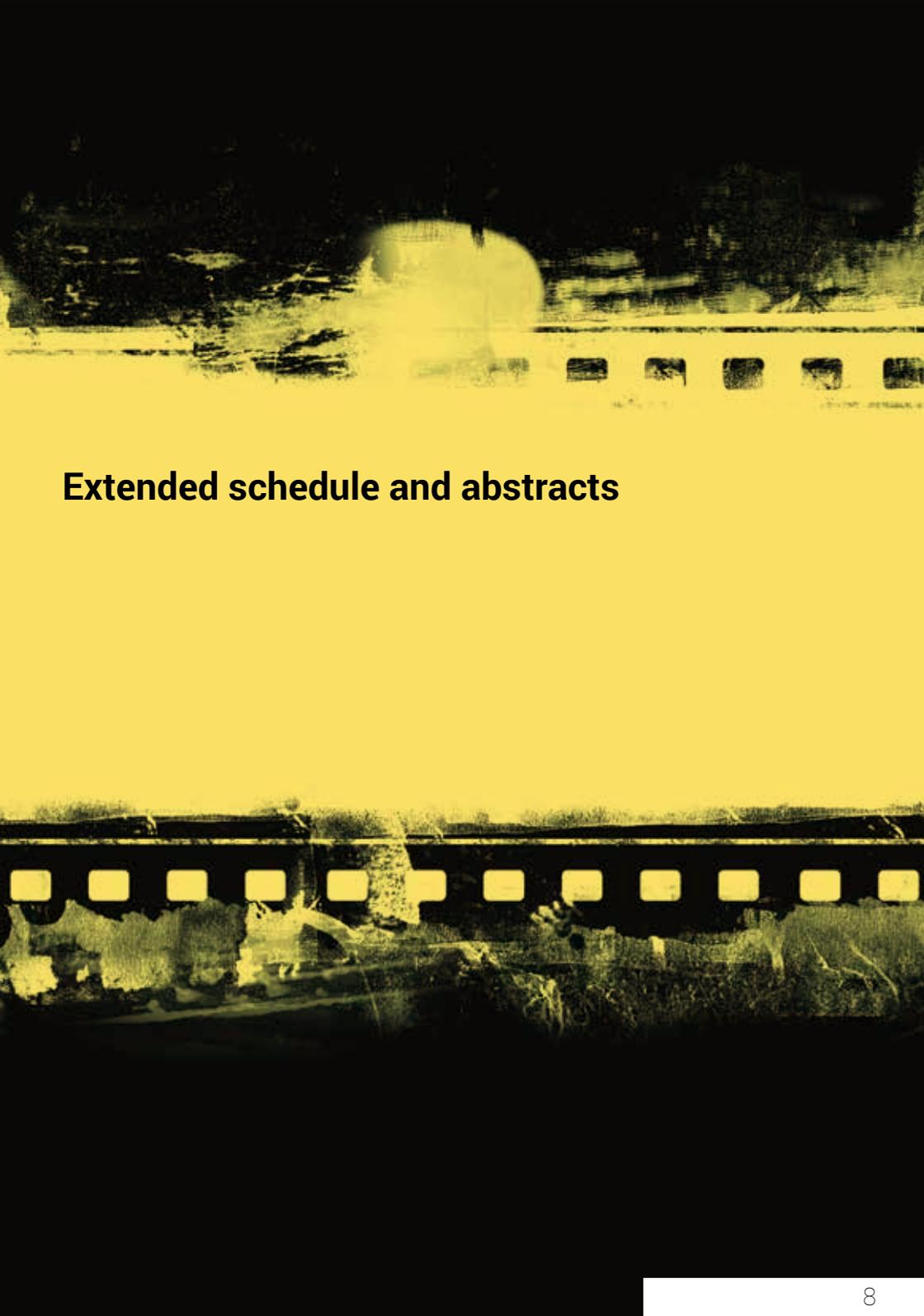
**Monday 24th November 9 am**  
**Venue 1: 80.01.02 (SAB Cinema)**

## 2: The industry/academy filmmaking relationship

**Monday 24th November 3.20 pm**  
**Venue 1: 80.01.02 (SAB Cinema)**

## 3: The future of academic filmmaking

**Tuesday 25th November 4 pm**  
**Venue 1: 80.01.02 (SAB Cinema)**



## **Extended schedule and abstracts**



## The Sister: research artefact, professional development opportunity, calling card or all of the above?

**Dr Kathleen Dooley**  
*Department of Screen and Media*  
*Flinders University*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 11.20 am**

**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

*The Sister* forms the practical component of a creative PhD study investigating portrayals of the body by French directors Catherine Breillat, Claire Denis and Marina de Van. By writing and directing a short film, informed by the three filmmakers' work, Kath produced an artefact that created new knowledge about their approaches. The film production is practice as research, enabling a thorough investigation of identified concerns through the writing, preproduction, production and postproduction of a short film work. Having been developed and produced in an academic environment, the work can clearly be considered a research artefact or 'thesis film'; however, the writer/director had a second goal. She also wished to produce a film that might build upon her previously produced body of work, functioning as a calling card for future projects in Australia.

This paper will explore the conflict created by these dual goals- to make a film that explores the cinema of another culture and fulfils the requirements of a PhD thesis, and to produce a work that might gain interest and exposure in film festivals in Australia and abroad. Kath will detail the challenges associated with the processes of developing the film, and marketing it post-PhD.

# Screenwriting in the academy: developing and writing screenplays for practice-based PhDs

**Craig Batty**  
**Suya Sung-Ju Suya Lee**  
**Louise Sawtell**  
**Stephen Sculley**  
**Stayci Taylor**  
*RMIT University*

Panel

**Time: 11.20 am**  
**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

The number of PhD candidates undertaking practice-based research has grown dramatically in the last ten or so years, particularly in the areas of creative writing and media production. This has led to an increased interest in research about and for screenwriting practice, resulting in an academy that is now better equipped to supervise candidates wishing to develop and write stories for the screen. Nevertheless, questions still often arise about the nature of screenwriting practice research, ones that both PhD candidates and academics continuously grapple with. For example, in the academy what is a screenplay? What is its purpose and how should it be understood? How should it look and how should it be read? How might it be developed and written, using or purposely abandoning industry models?

These questions are significant in the pursuit of understanding screenwriting practice in the context of research, and are ones that will be explored in this panel. Between a PhD supervisor and five candidates, arguments will be made about the nature of the screenplay in the academy; the fabric of a screenplay for a practice-based PhD; and the screenplay as knowledge, driven by and expressing a research question. Covering aspects of screenwriting practice such as development, genre, character, structure and perspective, the panel members will refer to existing literature on screenwriting in the academy as well as reflect on their own experiences of undertaking a practice-based PhD.

## Capture

**Hester Joyce**  
*La Trobe University*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 11.20 am**  
**Venue 3: 80.02.02**

*Capture* uses sound/text from Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories*, zoological descriptions from Dagg's *The Giraffe: its biology, behaviour and ecology*, local tribal accounts of giraffe behaviour and vision from archival family and public footage, maps, photographs, magazines, and interviews. The method is to remix collected and found, screen and sound images of giraffes that attempt to control and contain them, creating a four minute audio-visual piece underpinned by themes of memory, place and sustainability. The piece is shaped by my experience of giraffes, from the fanciful versions of Kipling and Roald Dahl's *The Giraffe, Pelly and Me* through a childhood littered with 'wild things' and collected game park footage. The sounds are a variety of voices telling tales about giraffes, fanciful and not, truthful and not.

As an academic film it attempts to raise these questions about representation in a playful and visual form —to posit ideas through a flow of images and sounds rather than through a constructed argument, thus contesting standard academic rhetoric.

# Navigating through the practice-as-research arena, 2002–2014

**Dr Nick Cope**  
**Xi'an Jiaotong**  
*Liverpool University*  
*Suzhou, Jiangsu, China*

Paper

**Time: 11.50 am**  
**Venue 3: 80.02.02**

Debates about practice as research/ practice led research/ practice informed research in UK higher education media practice departments ran concurrently with the engagement in an ongoing intermedia collaboration between film maker and academic, Dr. Nick Cope and composer Tim Howle (Professor of Contemporary Music, University of Kent, UK). This paper maps the developments of those debates as the author engaged in AHRC funded workshops and symposia, and contributed to academic journal publications of practice based work; and how these informed the development, evaluation and engagement of the collaboration in determining the 'researchness' of the practice and its contributions to new knowledge.



## Notes from *The Land*: a micro-budget, collaborative, improvised feature

**Gregory Ferris**  
*University of Technology Sydney*

Paper

**Time: 1 pm**

**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

*The Land* is a filmmaking experiment between academic and filmmaker Gregory Ferris, internationally renowned photographer Ingvar Keene, and the actors/playwrights Steve Rodgers and Cameron Stewart. Financed by the four key creatives, with additional support from the Academy (in this case the University of Technology, Sydney), the film is an improvised, collaborative drama currently in post production that uses an unique points system, partly inspired by the system used for the Australian improvised feature *Mens' Group* (which Rodgers also co-starred in). The current plan is for the film to be released as a limited edition boxed artwork that will include photographs, an interactive eBook alongside other ancillary items. *The Land* features performances from Rodgers and Stewart, alongside Anna Lise Phillips and Anni Finsterer, and is at its heart the story of a friendship that is tested by a very dark secret, and with a storyline that fractures into two parallel narratives. *Notes from The Land...* presents the development and production of the film, the use of improvisation and multiple cameras, the plans for distribution and transmediality, as well as the collaborative approaches taken between the producers and the cast and crew, and will feature excerpts from the film.

# No laughing matter: pitching narrative television comedy while navigating vernacular theory and ethics committees

**Marilyn Tofler**  
**Jason Bainbridge**  
**Carolyn Beasley**  
*Department of Film and Animation*  
*Swinburne University*

Panel

**Time: 1 pm**

**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

This panel explores the development of a best practice model for pitching narrative comedy television series. It investigates how best to elicit and utilise tacit and vernacular industry knowledge through the use of executive interviews and explains the challenges and tactics of getting research into the creative and decision making process needed for creative arts production through the ethics clearance process.

The research includes a small pilot study in which television network drama heads, producers and decision making development staff at State and Federal film funding bodies will be interviewed about the role of the television pilot in the pitching process, attributes sought for successful funding, and insights into what television networks, funding bodies and producers look for in a project.

Aspects that will be examined include qualities of successful funding approvals for comedy projects, advantages of including a pilot or pilot scenes within a project proposal. In addition, there will be a case study of *Best Intentions*, a television comedy series proposal and pilot. This pilot was previously funded by an Early Careers Research grant.

Associate Professor Jason Bainbridge will look at Thomas McLaughlin's notion of vernacular theory as an interesting intervention into the areas of practitioner/academic and research/practice by taking research out of the exclusive province of academia and reinterpreting it as an everyday practice. In this presentation he will offer an outline of vernacular theory together with case studies and suggestions for how it can function as a framework for creative production and more specifically television production.

Dr Carolyn Beasley will address the clash of cultures between creative research and ethics committees, and explores strategies available for screenwriters when faced with trying to gain ethics clearance for their work.

## Reflections on *Johnny Ghost*: yes it can be done !

**Donna McRae**  
*Deakin*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 1 pm**

**Venue 3: 80.02.02**

In 2010 I was determined to make a micro budget film through any means possible, and one option that presented itself was a PhD. Tired of waiting for funding body guidelines to change I felt I needed to take the matter in to my own hands and embark on a four year journey that would:

- a) allow me to research my area in a meaningful way
- b) make my debut feature film
- c) trigger a scholarship and
- d) give me a qualification.

This presentation will focus on:

The particular PhD context I was in at Monash—making a film in a fine art department as opposed to a film department;

How the feature film *Johnny Ghost* has crossed over from the university context to the wider industry—screened at overseas and local film festivals, won seven awards including two special jury prizes, best feature and best female director, and secured North American distribution with LA company Continuum Pictures and Eone, and local and NZ distribution with Titan View—and what pathways emerged throughout that process; and how my experiences making this film integrate into a 'model' that could be repeated by others.

# disnature

**Angie Black**  
**La Trobe University**

Screening/Paper

**Time: 1.30 pm**

**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

Angie Black was one of ten invited filmmakers/media artists to produce a video project, forming the larger collaborative art project, entitled *Nature in the Dark*.

*Nature in the Dark* is a joint venture between conservationists and artists, who used the same material, gathered profiling mammals' responses to fire to different outcomes.

Exploring the effects of fire on native animals using the still images captured from the Wombat State Forest and Bunyip State Park, animals are 'caught on camera' as part of a scientific data collection project. These still images provide initiating content for the creative adaptations, remixes and interventions of scientific footage taken of native bush animals' activities at night.

Angie produced the short experimental film *disnature* in response to the research exploring the effects of fire on native animals. Using the still images made available through the research, Angie experimented with an in camera technique of projecting the images of the animals on to smoke and capturing the image. Specifically, *disnature* investigates emotional responses, through movement, of native animals engulfed by smoke, disoriented and confused, trapped in a dystopian landscape, surviving the carnage after the fire.

## First Person Kodachrome



**Andrew Taylor**  
*University of Technology Sydney*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 2 pm**

**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

*First Person Kodachrome* is an obituary—of sorts—of a dead media form. It is also a film about Kodachrome, slide shows and me.

In 2004 the last of the Kodak slide carousels rolled off the production line and a few years later Kodak stopped manufacturing Kodachrome, the 'classic' slide-film emulsion it developed 70 years earlier. These endings effectively marked the death of the photo-chemical slide show as a popular medium.

*First Person Kodachrome* is a personal history and idiosyncratic investigation of the slide show's influence, legacy and after-glow. It looks at Kodachrome through the lens of my family's slide collection and my own life and work as a filmmaker/photographer.

Despite its deep resonance in both post-war and contemporary culture, there have been virtually no commentaries on the slide show in general; and its intersection with art/photography/cinema, in particular. *First Person Kodachrome* is an evocative film essay that speaks to this gap in knowledge.

# Television production: how to make programmes within a commercial and academic context

**Lucy Brown**  
**Lyndsay Duthie**  
*Senior Lecturers and Film  
and TV Programme Leaders*  
*University of Hertfordshire, UK*

Paper

**Time: 2 pm**

**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

In this presentation Brown and Duthie, as dual practitioners, will investigate the relationship between their research and professional practice. Lucy Brown and Lyndsay Duthie are award-winning television programme-makers (having worked for BBC, ITV, Channel 4, SKY), senior lecturers and academic programme leaders. They run the MA and BA Film and TV programmes at the University of Hertfordshire. Our presentation will seek to critique and celebrate the tradition of television programme making within the context of academia and the 'real world' of commercial television programme-making by examining the key ingredients that make a successful TV programme, the pitfalls and the future for this relationship.

Brown and Duthie are currently writing and filming a book called *The Studio Production Handbook*, designed to provide students with everything they need to know to create a successful studio television programme. Brown/Duthie are keen to maximise the commercial opportunities by understanding the nature of the television business and how programmes are commissioned and funded. Brown and Duthie have found that all too often the academic and commercial world are viewed as two separate entities and through their research they are exploring ways in which the barriers between these worlds can be removed to enable a closer working relationship that has maximum impact.

# Reflexivity: the academy and documentary making

**Steve Thomas**  
VCA, University of Melbourne

Screening/Paper

**Time: 2.30 pm**

**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

I suggest in this paper/film presentation that my role as a researcher-filmmaker within the academy doesn't just allow or assist my filmmaking practice to continue but provides a precious opportunity to reflect on that practice in a way not generally available to industry based filmmakers.

My PhD application proposal concluded: 'Whilst there are many documentary makers in Australia intuitively employing innovative, ethical practice in the field, there is not much capacity for documenting or critically reflecting on what they are doing, either for the benefit of the wider documentary community, or crucially, for the pedagogical needs of future filmmakers'.

My PhD is entitled *Reflexivity, Collaboration and Ethical Documentary Filmmaking: a Practice Based Approach*. In the context of scholarly and industrial views of reflexivity and ethics, I am self-reflexively researching my filmmaking approach through making a documentary entitled *Freedom Stories*. This is a collaborative film with former asylum seekers who are now Australian citizens (see <http://freedomstoriesproject.com>). I am exploring how such research might alter firstly, my own filmmaking (particularly in terms of the relationships between myself and participants) and secondly, the finished film ie. rendering the filmmaking process more transparent



## Donkey In A Lion's Cage

**Siobhan Jackson**  
VCA, University of Melbourne

Screening/Paper

**Time: 4.20 pm**

**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

*Donkey in a Lion's Cage*, is the second in a planned trilogy of silent films. The first in the trilogy, 1, 2, 3. was a co-production with University of Television and Film, Munich. The third, *I Dug a Hole and it's Full of Rain*, is planned for filming in 2014 in Thailand.

The trilogy has primarily explored two core ideas; one formal, one thematic. Having begun my career as a visual artist (in the mostly mute mediums of painting, sculpture and textiles) I have found myself longing to push my film making into a world that communicates without talking or the use of familiar 'natural' sound. Instead I wish to employ pictures to do the talking and sounds as an emotional navigator, not an anchor to the natural world; posing the question, how does one make relevant, contemporary 'silent' cinema.

Thematically, the films have explored the lives of people living in worlds ruled by an unpredictable moral compass. The films explore these ideas by challenging the formal assumptions of contemporary cinema, investigating the possibility of making moving images that 'speak' to an alternate understanding of what contemporary cinema could be. Perhaps leading to an alternate space that may privilege feeling over understanding; a space that deliberately knocks the edges off definitive story understanding and puts the emphasis on visceral comprehension. In doing so I hope to broaden the formal conversation cinema can have with a contemporary audience and re-consider 'silent' story telling in a contemporary context.

## How many ways to say you?

**Bettina Frankham**  
*University of Technology Sydney*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 4.20 pm**

**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

As the creative practice research component of a non-traditional PhD, the short experimental documentary film *How many ways to say you?* explores aspects of a poetic approach to screen based documentary. In particular it investigates the aspects of formal discomfort, rhetorical strategies and the creation of aesthetic experiences as part of a multifaceted and interlinked approach to audience engagement.

This is a project that is quite deliberately situated at the intersection of documentary and artistic practice and as such provides a practical demonstration of the impact of formal discomfort on documentary representation. While it is documentary in its fidelity to experience and attention to the accuracy of the information conveyed, it is also essayistic in its exploration of networks of connection, and artistic in its foregrounding of medium and technique. From the outset, techniques of defamiliarisation are applied to disrupt any expectations of a direct and unmediated representation of reality. The film is structured around a range of Khmer words that are used in place of the pronoun you, and engages with a form of image driven, essayistic reflection on ideas of interpersonal relationship, history, memory and representation.

# Reverse Adapation: Or... the adventures of one film script as a development tool for a novel and back again

**Annabelle Murphy**  
*VCA, University of Melbourne*

Paper

**Time: 4.20 pm**

**Venue 3: 80.02.02**

In undertaking the process of what I've termed 'Reverse Adaptation'; that is the adaptation of my feature script to a novel. This has ended up as a bilateral creative process; script to novel, novel to script. As the adventure unfolded, it turned out (alas!) that my screenplay was not finished after all.

There are many observations of interest for screenwriters in the process of reverse adaptation. Each medium has its 'strengths and weakness' for the writer: The orgy of words enjoyed by the novelist after years of starvation within the dogma of screenwriting; the relative boniness of a screenplay which allows the writer to more easily see and 'chiropract' a screenplay's structure; as well as the functional differences between 'showing' and 'telling' as manifest in each form, are just some of the areas open to 'reverse' interrogation.

This paper, which will be presented as a combination of academic context, script reading and adapted prose reading, will examine the process of reverse adaptation through the lens of a creative work being developed within academia. This research not only seeks to create a standalone creative work of high quality (which will be published, universally acclaimed and sell in 30 languages!) but also, to shed light on the little researched area of reverse adaptation, particularly from a writer's point of view.

## Pop psychology and gridlife

**Paul Fletcher**  
VCA, University of Melbourne

Screening/Paper

**Time: 4.50 pm**  
**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

Produced as part of the research project *Reconstructing the Familiar*—a work based on collaborative inter-disciplinary exchange and translation between music and animation by Mark Pollard and Paul Fletcher.

Photographic images taken by Mark Pollard have been used as starting points for animations created by Paul Fletcher. Simultaneously Mark has composed music in response to ideas or process and content implied in Paul's animation and sound work. The original sounds are used as source material for the creative applying of textural, timbral and temporal modification.

**Mark:** I've tried to create a sonic version of the visual approach and narrative impact.

**Paul:** These animations are very much process based; improvised and planned iterative permutations variations, processing, filtering, additions building to greater or lesser density of textures and rhythms sometime in a manner akin to granular synthesis and sculpture of sound.

# Experiences and practices of doctoral studies in two Finnish art universities

**Kirsi Rinne**  
*Aalto University*

Paper

**Time: 4.50 pm**

**Venue 3: 80.02.02**

This paper presents results of a recent study which has examined experiences and perceptions of artists undertaking doctoral studies in two Finnish art universities. The aim has been to gain understanding of the challenges of doctorates which combine theoretical standpoints with the creations of art works and to shed light into the context and circumstances of doctoral studies.

The thematic analysis reveals that students face difficulties in integrating artistic productions and written text. One of the key findings concerns the perplexion of the sheer amount of work a doctorate in art universities requires. The scope of artistic production was usually overestimated at the beginning, too many were thought to be needed in order to answer to the initial research question.

The study contains notions on required support, mainly supervision and other support structures. The hands-off approach in supervision seemed to dominate. In turn, support from fellow artist-researchers and members of artistic teams appeared relevant.

Further, the research deals with questions of documentation and writing on one hand and physical set-ups and institutional research infrastructures, on the other. Finally, a short exploration into the question of identity and agency, will be presented.



# Animation interrupted

**Robert Hunter Stephenson**  
VCA  
*University Of Melbourne*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 5.20 pm**  
**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

*Nightlife* is a sand animation that did not have a screenplay or storyboard. The subject matter or 'topic' was the only guide. Whenever there was time available to work on this, the objective was to complete a scene not necessarily knowing with any certainty its logical place in the narrative. Sometimes there was stimulus from a previously recorded scene and sometimes it was whatever came to mind. The complexity of each scene was often informed by the time available to animate.

In making both of these animated films I drifted away from 'process' due, in part, to the fragmented time structure of work and home life and also to accept the resulting imperfections, spontaneity and immediacy from working in a straight-ahead way. There is conflict here as much of what we teach in the film school is about process and attempting certainty in the planning and execution- to make sure that all is right before taking the first frame.

Working as an academic has meant filmmaking is non-continuous and the intervals allow time to re-consider, re-navigate and invent during 'the making'. Results are varied and the loose nature of having a reasonably open-ended method echoes some aspects of early cinema animation when process and order was being formulated. Working straight-ahead may be described as having a lack of control or discipline, but working with such uncertainty does not mean ignorance of control but applying it differently.

## Three Days in Kamakura



**Alec McAulay**  
**RMIT University**

Screening/Paper

**Time: 5.20 pm**

**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

*Three Days in Kamakura* is a short film by writer/director Alec McAulay, a Scot based in Yokohama, Japan. The film was shot over three days in various locations near to Tokyo. The film is a contemporary fiction telling the story of how a small boy of mixed heritage background becomes the catalyst to heal the troubled marriage of a British man and a Japanese woman. The dialogue mixes English and Japanese in an authentic manner, the cast includes Japanese, Brits and Canadians, the composer is American, and post-production was carried out in the UK. This transnational character to both the narrative and production context exhibit salient trends emerging in the sphere of Japanese filmmaking.

## Authentic Tea? Authentic Tea Narratives?

**Jinghong Zhang**  
*The Australian National University*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 1 pm**

**Venue 3: 80.02.02**

This film draws a portrait of a Chinese tea trader who goes to a rural village in Yunnan in southwest China to trade tea every harvest season. Wen sets a high criterion for the authenticity of tea, but the rising price of tea and fierce competition in trade results in the proliferation of fake tea products.

For using ethnographic films as a part of academic research, there has long been a debate on whether or not films can provide authentic narratives. This paper calls for rethinking about the authenticity that films can provide by using films as more for active interpretation rather than simply as a recording tool in academic work. It is based upon one of my particular research, in which I combine written with visual ethnography to examine how traders in a rural village of China identify the authentic tea products from the fake. This paper proposes an “open” approach, in particular to edit the films towards an open interpretive way, and to leave spaces for the audiences to comprehend the intrinsic nature of the subjects.

## Provenance in academic filmmaking: My Mother's Village



**Aaron Burton**  
**College of Fine Arts**  
**University of New South Wales**

Screening/Paper

**Time: 9 am**

**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

*My Mother's Village* is a personal documentary response to a series of ethnographic films produced by my anthropologist mother, Sharon Bell, and filmmaker father, Geoff Burton.

Between 1976 and 1978, my mother conducted doctoral anthropological field research in Kanewala, a Sinhala Buddhist village roughly 35 kilometers southeast of Colombo. Coinciding with her research she produced a series of three ethnographic films, *The Sri Lanka Series* (1980). These films were shot by a small crew, including my father, who was the cinematographer and co-director. Four women, a community of fishermen, and a dance instructor became their subjects and friends.

I have had the privileged opportunity to re-visit the communities where my mother lived, and focus my lens on the next generation of cultivators, fishermen, dancers, and family friends. I wanted to see how they, like me, are navigating heredity and inheritance.

One of the more telling aspects of my research has been to compare the academic contexts of my mother's PhD and ethnographic filmmaking in the 70s and 80s with the demands of my own visual arts PhD program. I have developed a conceptual framework for progressing and articulating a personal documentary practice that fosters experimental cross-disciplinary forms of knowledge production.

## Watch-n-Act



**Nicholas Hansen**  
*RMIT University*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 9 am**

**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

A Watch and Act warning is issued by Australian fire authorities when 'An emergency threatens you'. This alert was issued on 9th February 2014 for a suburban bushfire in Fawkner, Melbourne. The video work *Watch-n-Act* showcases a photographer exploring and documenting a post-disaster scene whilst also collecting objects uncovered by the fire. The work is exploring two points of view, one locked off video frame of the scene, the other the photographers view.

This is a performance of journalism in action or what I am calling action journalism. The piece is research into the photo-journalists experience of depicting the post disaster scene.

This work questions the shifting relationship between media representations and factuality, while also querying the amounts of detailed data collected and how this inspires the desire for an equivalent meaning.



## Essayistic spaces and moving image research

**Smiljana Glisovic**  
*RMIT University*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 9.30 am**

**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

The essay form has been discussed at length by writers and filmmakers as a form that is essentially about experimentation, exploration and discovery. One might say that the form is then always research. It is a particularly useful form for practice-based research as it invites 'thinking' into the realm of the physical. My previous research has centred on how this relationship between the abstract and experiential plays out in a moving image installation. My current research looks at whether the software Korsakow might offer the same kind of essayistic exploration of moving image material as does the installation. I will be presenting work that I have transposed from the installation into Korsakow and discussing the affordances and limitations of this transposition from one medium into another.

# Spotlight: Filmmaking as social science

## Panel

**Time: 10 am**

**Venue 3: 80.02.02**

In today's digital cultures, technological innovations are incessantly challenging and changing the economics, politics, and aesthetics of the media world. While these innovations simultaneously urge and allow for new social science research methods in terms of data gathering and analysis, the media of presenting and distributing research outcomes remains largely reduced to aesthetics of the written word.

This spotlight session probes into the absence of such multi-media research accounts (e.g. documentaries, interactive websites, embedded videos in journal articles) in the social sciences by critically elaborating on the particular challenges and potentials of film-based practices.

In order to explore the boundaries between these film-based practices and more traditional social science research methods, we invite those interested in or already applying them in the research process (from young documentary film makers to established senior researchers) and those who manage and support the dissemination of the products (from journal editors to university managers) to workshop this core political, economic, technological, and professional academic challenge of the 21st century.

# Spotlight Convenors

## **Professor Martin Wood** *School of Management, RMIT University*



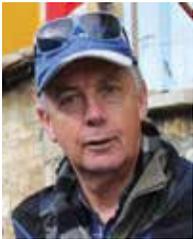
Martin Wood is a teacher, researcher, theorist, writer and filmmaker. He coordinates the The Arts of Design and Management Research Cluster in the RMIT Centre for Sustainable Organisations and Work. Martin has published in key scholarly outlets including the *Academy of Management Journal*, for which he jointly won the 2005 Best Paper Award. In 2010 his short documentary film *Lines of Flight* (2009) won awards at film festivals internationally.

## **Laurent Marti** *RMIT University and St. Gallen University*



Laurent's research focuses on organizational processes in the creative industries. In this context, he has also applied and published on film-based research methods. As a visiting lecturer, he has been teaching courses in the intersection between entrepreneurial and designerly practices at arts schools.

## **John Moore** *Principal, Sensible Films*



John Moore has been involved in the entertainment business since he started working at the Pram Factory Theatre in 1978.

John has developed considerable expertise at making dramatised history docs that tell strong personal stories. *Abortion, Corruption & Cops* was nominated for the Sydney Film Festival Dendy Awards in 2006 and the docu-dramas *Menzies & Churchill at War* and *Monash: The Forgotten Anzac* were ratings winner on ABC TV in 2008.

## **Prof Chris Steyaert** *University of St. Gallen, Switzerland*



Chris' research themes include organizing creativity in entrepreneurship, innovation and cities; dialogical processes of diversity and difference, language and translation in multinationals, forms of performing/writing research, forms of experiential and aesthetical learning. On the editorial board of *Organization*, *Journal of World Business* (2001–2006), *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*.

## Time and Tide—The Life of Norman Creek

**Trish Fitzsimons**  
**Griffith University**

Screening/Paper

**Time: 10 am**

**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

Documented accounts of Norman Creek in the early colonial history portray an abundant ecosystem of fish and lush vegetation, supporting a substantial population of Aboriginal people. It was the first Brisbane catchment to be mapped by surveyor James Warner in 1839. But for much of its history of European occupation, Norman Creek and its immediate environs has been treated as a tip, a drain and a sewer. Now, like the Brisbane River before it, the value of this creek and others is being rediscovered.

*Time and Tide—The Life of Norman Creek* explores the history and current life on and in the immediate environs of Norman Creek. Oral histories, maps and documents, archival photographs and film and an audio/visual interpretation of the creek with and without pulses of floodwater are being gathered. I am particularly interested to gather accounts of the lives and works of those - often artists, artisans and/or activists- who have historically recognized the importance of this precious urban ecosystem. The Norman Park boat building community is a good example of where it is urgent to record histories whilst the protagonists are still alive.

With funding from the Brisbane City Council this project has so far recorded 21 oral histories and documented many elements of the creek, its inhabitants and environs.

# Creating dialogue in history through film

**Maryanne Jebb**  
**Research Fellow at AIATSIS**

Screening/Paper

**Time: 10.30 am**  
**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

The *Australian History Journal* now dedicates a section of its reviews to exhibitions, a sign that scholarly history is moving beyond the text and developing a critical framework for its multimedia productions. It is perhaps a sign of acceptance that academic historians are also curators creating interpretations for multiple audiences. Film is also becoming the territory of historians not just as a source of evidence found in an archive, but they are stretching the boundaries of researcher and director and becoming part of the production as well as postproduction. In this paper I focus on a short film I researched and co-directed called *Burrowing Bees* to explore film making as an instrument for collaborative history making. I particularly look at how in the context of films drawn from recorded life stories with Aboriginal storytellers, the roles of director, researcher, editor, narrator and talent are up for negotiation. *Burrowing Bees* is an eight-minute film that is on permanent exhibition at Gwoonwardu Mia the Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre for five Aboriginal language groups in a town 1,000 kms north of Perth in Western Australia. In 2012 the Permanent exhibition won two national awards. I believe the short film *Burrowing Bees* is central to the success of this community based exhibition to engage with multiple audiences, turning on the ability of film to bring character, emotion and dialogue to interpretations of history.

## The Silences: a feature length personal essay documentary

**Margot Nash**  
*University of Technology Sydney*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 11.20 am**  
**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

I grew up in a house of secrets. I didn't know my father was mentally ill until I was ten years old and my sister told me. I also didn't know that my mother had suffered a long and debilitating depression until I started researching this film. My mother always said she was never depressed. She filled the silences in the house with exaggerated stories often mixed with cruel observation. Perhaps her constant talking masked her desperation and loneliness, but she had an acid tongue at times that could undermine and silence others. I wondered what might happen if I made a film about the silences? Could I unfold the story from a different point of view and, in so doing, learn something new that might also speak to others? I had survived my family and my parents were both dead, but I needed time to develop my ideas in a safe environment. I was nervous about approaching the film funding bodies with their commercial demands and began to explore different approaches.

Could I find a new way to tell the story if I fell headlong into the silences, if I forgot the neat screenwriting structural templates and stepped into the unknown? Using family photographs, documentary footage and clips from all her films, Margot Nash investigates the mother/daughter relationship, the creative process and the gaps and silences in family history.



## Mother's Day

**Andrew O'Keefe**  
VCA  
*University of Melbourne*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 11.20 am**  
**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

A young father's future and past collide when his imprisoned brother forces him to deliver on their vengeful pact.

*Mother's Day*, a tale of a revenge, is a fifteen-minute short film that explores audience reactions when presented with recognisable narrative and aesthetic traits of genre cinema then both circumvents and exploits those expectations through the use of contemporary stylisation of performance and a recognisably Australian setting. The film's narrative uses patricidal plot elements found in Greek-tragedy coupled with black-and-white photography and a chiaroscuro lighting style that hark to American film-noirs in the vein of *The Big Sleep* (1946). Yet does the contradictory suburban Australian mise-en-scene and décor displace the film and offer audiences a reinterpretation on the film-noir genre? Furthermore, the film juxtaposes the stylised monochromatic aesthetic and naturalistic 'method' performances against a stereotypical 'Aussie' character (beer drinking, unshaven, uncouth, cricket-loving, no-hopers) to create something new.

*Mother's Day* was selected for screening in the prestigious Flickerfest International Short Film Festival, Australia's largest, in 2013.

## Submerged

**Darren Mapletoft**  
*University of Chichester*

Screening

**Time: 11.50 am**  
**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

When a teleportation experiment goes wrong, submariner Billy Bourne finds his crew-mates have all disappeared. He faces a race against time to make his escape.

# Community cinema reimagined

**Iqbal Barkat**  
**Macquarie University**

Paper

**Time: 12.20 pm**

**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

There is recent evidence of productive film practice that features filmmakers making composite screen works collaboratively with communities in which they are embedded. This practice eschews established cinematic codes in favour of genre and mode violation. It demonstrates a situated commitment to the people and place it is engaged with and to the creative process of filmmaking. These works appear to be a fusion of art cinema, whose narratives are marked by a fidelity to the principles of “realism and authorial expressivity” (Bordwell, 1979) and documentary, community or participatory/collaborative filmmaking.

I propose the term “Community Cinema” to refer to this emerging filmmaking practice as I see it as a reimagining of community filmmaking within the context of art cinema. In this paper, I will utilise a number of case studies, including the making of my own film, *Mortars* (2014). I will place this practice within a historical context by linking it to the cinematic practice of Dziga Vertov and Jean Rouch. I argue that this practice offers new ways of thinking of community within filmmaking beyond those offered by community and participatory filmmaking. A number of the examples that I utilise have been auspiced by universities and other institutions. I discuss the possibilities and limits of such relationships.

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a dark top with white stripes on the shoulder. She is holding a white mobile phone to her ear with her right hand. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white.

## Post-Warhol, post-production: A model for filmmaking in the academy?

**Alex Munt**  
**Justin Harvey**  
*University of Technology Sydney*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 2 pm**

**Venue 1: 80.01.02**

In 2012 at UTS I was awarded one of those internal grants—modest in scale at \$4,000. These minor grants are typically accessible to those in creative practice, who often find themselves on the margins of ARC-like research funding geared towards ‘traditional’ scholarship. The expectations of internal funding are to ‘seed’ something of more weight (eg: screenplay development for a feature film (that is increasingly unlikely to be funded)). But with new modes of microbudget filmmaking and practices of digital ‘scripting’ —the game changes. Inspired by both the charm and the audaciousness of the films of Andy Warhol in the 1960s—their form and content—I had an idea to spend the money to make an experimental feature film. A remake, or better a ‘re-enactment’ of Warhol’s 1965 film with Superstar Edie Sedgwick *Poor Little Rich Girl*.

Our project embraces the 60s Warholian aesthetic (long takes, deliberate soft focus, a voyeuristic POV) whilst also negotiating new screen practices of sampling and remix. It updates notions of copy/appropriation/authenticity in post-Warholian digital culture. Before the film, Justin and I will speculate on this trend to post-production in moving image making and propose the post environment as a cogent space for ‘filmmaking in the academy’ into the future.

# The Chikukwa Project



**Gillian Leahy**  
*University of Technology Sydney*

Screening/Paper

**Time: 2 pm**

**Venue 2: 80.02.03**

Gillian Leahy (UTS) and Terry Leahy (UoN) are co-producers of this 50 minute documentary. Terry Leahy is a sociologist conducting research on food security projects in Africa. Gillian Leahy, also the director of the film, is an award winning documentary maker and researcher into documentary film.

The film concerns a development project in Zimbabwe which has been running for 20 years. As the film shows, the situation of the 7,000 Chikukwa villagers in the early nineties was difficult in the extreme. Their land had been seriously degraded through over clearing and over grazing. Starting with a small self help group, the project expanded to transform the landscape, the agriculture and the social context.

The fundamental research question is why this project has been so successful when most projects for food security in Africa fail. The answers include the agricultural methods used, the participatory project organization and the decision to prioritize food security rather than cash incomes. The two filmmakers chose a documentary format to ensure the widest possible dissemination of these research findings and to visually document the project, providing an evidence base and historical record.

# Eating Cultures



**Holly Giesman**  
*University of Roehampton*

Screening

**Time: 2 pm**

**Venue 3: 80.02.02**

I produced the film *Eating Cultures* as part of my practice-based PhD at the University of Roehampton in London. The thesis, which also includes a written component, confronts a fundamental dilemma for documentary filmmakers and scholars: How do we deal with claims and expectations of authenticity—the assumption that documentary corresponds to the “real” world in a way that fiction does not—despite the fact that documentary can only ever mediate reality? I explored this dilemma in practice and by seeking insight from others who also deal with issues of authenticity and mediation but in a completely different context—in the foreign national restaurant in London. The film and the written thesis work together to construct a relationship between the meal in the restaurant and the cross-cultural documentary film based around the metaphors of “eating cultures” and “mediating worlds”. The film encourages viewers to engage with these themes in an experiential and embodied way. The meal in the restaurant involves literal cooking, but filmmaking is also seen as a kind of “cooking” and the film as a kind of “meal”. Although this research was conducted within an arts and humanities context, both the filmmaking practice and the written work were heavily influenced by visual anthropology.

# Sightlines Team

## Sightlines Director

- Dr Leo Berkeley

## Organising Committee

- Dr Leo Berkeley
- Dr Smiljana Glisovic
- Aleng Joses
- Prof Martin Wood
- Laurent Marti

## Selection Committee

- Dr Leo Berkeley
- Dr Smiljana Glisovic
- Dr Craig Batty
- Dr Stephen Gaunson
- Prof Martin Wood
- Laurent Marti
- Prof Sarah Pink

## Screen Cultures Lab Team Leaders

- Dr Craig Batty
- Dr Stephen Gaunson
- Dr Leo Berkeley

## Event Documentation

- Nicholas Hansen

## Festival Tech and AV Support

- RMIT IT

## Festival Communication and Marketing

- Wendy Little
- Roberta Mascitti



**The Screen Cultures Research Lab**

**The Australian Screen Production Education & Research Association (ASPERA)**