



Sightlines: Filmmaking in the Academy

Dear Sightlines participants,

Following our inaugural festival, we are interested in establishing a process of peer-review and publication for the films that were part of the 2014 event. We would like to propose a peer-review model that will further the debate in regard to evaluation and publication of moving-image research.

We propose a set of guidelines, outlined below, which will eventuate in an online publication, and serve as a space for further development of this field. As we are setting up this model, any and all feedback is welcomed so that we can generate an open debate around the issues the sector is facing. We would like to make this debate public, subject to your permission (we can discuss how you as contributor can remain anonymous should you wish to do so).

We are planning to have a page on the ASPERA website dedicated to Sightlines, which will hopefully be up and running shortly. For now, we ask that you have a look at our propositions below, and send in the relevant material if you wish your work from Sightlines 2014 to be peer-reviewed.

We ask that the films are submitted via the Sightlines Vimeo account, as per the submission for the festival. All other documentation can be emailed to screencultures.research@rmit.edu.au with "Sightlines 2014 submission" in the subject line of the email.



Sightlines: Peer-Review Guidelines

Editors' note on peer-review process

We already have some good models for the peer-review and publication of research in the form of moving image works. Most notably we have taken inspiration from John Dovey's model for Screenworks and the model offered by the Journal of Artistic Research, as they align with some of our intentions: to generate a dialogue amongst our community on the topic of evaluation of screen-based research; to leave the parameters around the evaluation criteria loose enough so as to create a space where new approaches might emerge and influence existing ERA models of evaluation.

We have set out with a number of convictions, as apparent in the guidelines below, but we also want to know if others share our convictions. We would like this to be part of the dialogue. We want to remain open about how we might evolve this process and enable ever more complex publications/dialogues/questions to develop.

We think of screen-based research as having value both in terms of process and outcome, so we value processes even if the outcome may be a 'failed' attempt at a particular inquiry. For this reason we envisage our proposed space as a site where you can contribute such works, in a form that best exposes the practice as research. In the future we hope to develop a platform that can be flexible enough to accommodate any kind of presentation mode but for now the focus will be on those works that were presented at Sightlines 2014.

A note for submission:

The screen practitioner-researcher determines whether their moving image work needs an accompanying text. This text can take any form that the screen practitioner-researcher chooses. We believe that some research-screen works need statements, others do not. Statements can/need to be in all manner of forms (for example, articulating the work's intentions/questions/lines of enquiry) and the screen practitioner-researcher should determine that form. If the practitioner-researcher chooses to submit a statement, it can be of any length, and can include the criteria by which they think the work should be evaluated.

A note on the peer-review process:

We propose a dynamic peer-review model where all aspects are published online with the work. Two reviewers will be sought to review the submitted work. They will be asked to write a 500-word response that will be published alongside the work. The author of the work will then respond to the reviews. A continuing, public conversation beyond this point is encouraged. All work submitted will be published even if it receives two negative reviews. This model is in the spirit of dialogue and conversation. All authors submitting work will be asked to also act as reviewers for other works submitted.

Some suggested guidelines for reviewers:

Evaluate the work on the basis by which you have been guided by the practitioner-researcher. If you feel the practitioner-researcher has not provided an adequate guide, please discuss this. The following are other suggestions regarding the approach to reviewing, but you can choose to ignore them. Ignoring them is making a certain kind of philosophical choice, so do it with intent, and try to include this in your review.

1. Which aspects of the submission are of interest/relevance and why?

Consider the submission's subject matter, its methods, outcomes or any other aspect that you deem important.

2. Does the submission live up to its potential?

Please reflect on the potential of the submission and the way it is realised. How might the submission be improved to better match its potential? This potential may directly relate to the artist's own statement, but does not have to.

Note: We would like to further the debate around where research resides and how to make it more explicit so that it can be evaluated as such. The following suggestions respond to this intention:

3. How does the submission expose practice as research?

You may like to consider the following:

- Is there evidence of a particular question, issue or problem that is explored?
- Is there evidence of innovation (in form or content for example)?
- Is the work contextualised within specific social/artistic theoretical fields?
- Is there evidence of new knowledge, interpretation, insights or experiences?

Note: we acknowledge the use of 'evidence' may be contentious, likewise the notion of evidence of 'experience'. We encourage a debate around such issues.

If a submission omits any of the above, please state whether this omission matters. Ultimately, a submission may successfully expose practice as research despite disappointing conventional academic criteria for the assessment of research. If applicable, please state where the breaching of such criteria is detrimental to the submission, and where it gains power from such subversion.

Finally, thank you all, once again, for being part of this conversation. We look forward to all and any responses, feedback, ideas, provocations, or even frustrations!

Best wishes,
Leo and Smiljana