MAAP - Multimedia Arts Asia Pacific

MAAP was established in 1997 to bring focus to new media cultural content emerging from the Asia Pacific regions and Australia. Now in its 11th year, MAAP has produced several media art festivals encompassing 14 different countries including events and exhibitions in Brisbane, Beijing, Shanghai and Singapore. MAAP explores media art from a research and programming perspective and partners with arts organizations in the region (and internationally) to activate projects involving the region's major and emerging media arts practitioners. MAAP creates new networks increasing cultural contact and understanding through the experience of media arts. MAAP is run from Brisbane, Australia by founding director Kim Machan and a dedicated incorporated board.

Curator Biography

Rachel O'Reilly is an independent curator and writer based in Brisbane, Australia. Between 2004 and 2007 she worked as Curatorial Assistant, Video and New Media at the Australian Cinémathèque, Queensland Art Gallery | Queensland Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane, home of the Asia Pacific Triennial. She recently co-curated The Leisure Class with Kathryn Weir, an Australian Cinematheque exhibition of contemporary international moving image work by artists exploring conspicuous leisure, consumption and waste (www.qag.qld.gov.au/cinetheque/current_programs/leisure_class). She was a member of the Place, Ground and Practice working group of the Pacific Rim New Media Summit, ISEA, 2006. Her writing has been published in Postcolonial Studies, Leonardo, Realtime, Artworks, Queensland Art Gallery publications and independent exhibition catalogues. Her article on the media art of Vernon Ah Kee, Lisa Reihana, and Qui Zhijie will be published in PLACE: Local Knowledge and New Media Practice, Danny Butt, Jon Bywater and Nova Paul (eds), Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008.

Film Studies Center

The Film Studies Center sponsors conferences, symposia, film screenings, visiting artists and scholars in its mission to further the study of cinema history, theory and culture. Visit our website at http://filmstudiescenter.uchicago.edu for further information on our programs and events.

Film Studies Center presents

VIDEO GROUND

RECENT MOVING IMAGE WORKS FROM AUSTRALIA AND AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

A Multimedia Arts Asia Pacific program curated by Rachel O'Reilly

Divide, John Gilles, 2004

FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2008, 7PM

Film Studies Center
5811 S. Ellis Avenue, C307
Peter Alwast (AUS)

**AT THE ROTUNDA**
2007, DVD, colour, sound, 12:00mins
This disaffection conceptual video work employs documentary tropes to explore discrete vernacular takes on belonging. Invited by the artist, a local politician addresses a crowd of gathered residents at the Colgate Palmolive Park in Queensland’s Gold Coast, detailing local government achievements. A representative from Colgate Palmolive publicizes strangely parallel commitments to community, and a group of youths in fancy dress perform a series of language ditties for the crowd. Alwast’s ambivalent, ambling camera explores the role of language in the construction of community and place on one overcast afternoon in the Australian suburbs.

Stella Brennan (Aotearoa/NZ)

**SOUTH PACIFIC**
2007, DVD, colour, sound, 10:30mins
This evocative work explores the legacy of World War Two and the impact of that era’s technologies on geographical and narrative perceptions of the Pacific. The video blends ultrasound, radar and grainy aerial footage with running text. The artist as channel-hopper, Brennan introduces the viewer to competing visions of the Pacific’s oceanic space: as a technicolour musical, a network of runways, a sea of islands. *SOUTH PACIFIC* is haunted by colonial fantasy, wartime reportage and outmoded spatial visualization technologies.

Rachel Rakena (Aotearoa/NZ)

**PACIFIC WASHPUP**
2003, DVD, colour, sound, 6:00mins
Pacific Islanders traditionally trace lineage along ocean currents, through historic connections to specific Island homelands. A collaboration between Maori artist Rachael Rakena, and Fez Fa’anana and Brian Fuata, Australian performers with Samoan heritage, *PACIFIC WASHPUP* presents a performative take on the Pacific Island diaspora. The plastic stripy bags that roll on to Sydney’s Bondi beach in this work are recognizable to many as a cheap and easy way to gather and lug belongings. Rakena playfully acknowledges their ubiquity as the typically chosen luggage of relocation for young Islanders migrating to Australia from Pacific homelands. Her work touches on the importance of the sea in narrating identity, as well as the economic and cultural challenges that accompany this contemporary rite of passage.

Merilyn Fairskye (AUS)

**CONNECTED**
2002-2006, DVD, colour, sound, 25:16mins
Local knowledge, anecdote, and radical conjecture are imbricated to address the impact of US satellite tracking station, Pine Gap, upon the community of Alice Springs in Central Australia. Officially named the Joint Defence Facility, Pine Gap was established in the 1960s as the result of a post-Cold War treaty between the American and Australian governments. While much of its operation remain secret to Australian government representatives, the facilities are known to be involved in military satellite signal processing. Visual distortions and sound recordings give testimony to the awkward and longstanding coexistence of Pine Gap staff, indigenous locals, activist communities, and the facility itself.

Vernon Ah Kee (AUS)

**WHITEFELLANORMAL**
2002, DVD, colour, sound, 2:00mins
*WHITEFELLANORMAL* is a short conceptual work of text and performance, informed by the problems of representation that connect portraits to maps. Anthropologist Norman Tindale traveled to Palm Island from the 1920s-1960s as part of his project to map Australian indigenous tribal lands and language groups. Brisbane-based artist, Vernon Ah Kee first discovered his relatives in these images, holding a catalogue card with only a number on it to represent their identity. They were relegated by force to Palm Island - essentially a penal colony for indigenous peoples who most strongly resisted resisted relocation. On the official versions of these image that were released to Ah Kee, the numbers were cropped off, alongside any references to the place of Palm Island. Only a head and shoulders remain, neatly centered. In *WHITEFELLANORMAL* Ah Kee performs these portraits purposefully off-centre out of an interest in retaining evidence of the uncomfortable local truths of strategic dispossession.

John Gillies (AUS)

**DIVIDE**
2006, DVD, colour, sound, 30:00mins
A voice speaking from the Old Testament - of the colonisation of the land of Canaan through the genocidal acts of the Israelites - is juxtaposed over a group of non-indigenous male figures journeying into an Australian landscape. The cultural layering and ambiguity in *DIVIDE* speaks of the foundation of Australia, it’s current fears and neuroses and the intruder as both destroyer and powerless witness. Sheep flock together in fear and panic, but are easily led by leaders who wander across the country, unrecconciled. *DIVIDE* stars 4 men, 35 sheep, a Chinese opera singer and a horse.