

# >MUTANT LOGIC/ARCHIVE USE, RE-USE AND AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS' MOVING IMAGE

**YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND A one-day research symposium and screenings curated by Steven Ball and hosted by British Artists' Film and Video Study Collection, Central St Martins and the International Centre for Fine Art Research, University of the Arts London.**

**Thursday 5 February, 2009, 10:30 – 17:00  
Innovation Centre Gallery, Central St Martins College of Art and Design,  
Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AP**

Australian artists' film and video has frequently involved the use and re-use of archive material and popular culture media. Most famously during the 1980s artists affiliated with the Sydney Super 8 Film Group developed a practice of 'sampling' - re-shooting from the TV screen - on super 8. These artists were not so concerned with the politically inflected deconstruction of their British 'Scratch Video' counterparts, as they were with creating poetic hybrid works. Mark Titmarsh coined the term Metaphysical TV for this practice typified by the re-filmed terror rattled sublime of *Square Bashing* (Stephen Harrop, 1982). Other exemplars of use and re-use include *Inside Television* (Built in Ghosts, 1983) constructed from an archive of eighties Australian TV, *The Illustrated Auschwitz* (Jackie Farkas, 1992) a convergence of the personal, the historical and Hollywood iconography, and *Picnic at Wolf Creek* (Soda\_Jerk with Sam Smith, 2006), an irreverent mash-up of Australian landscape movie tropes.

After decades of film and video practice much of this and earlier work is in a precarious cultural position and physical condition. Almost always marginal to both mainstream film culture and gallery exhibition, artists' film and video in Australia, like its cousin in the UK, is undergoing a process of reappraisal, preservation and archiving, while material from public, private and personal moving image archives continues to be a rich source of material for many artists' work.

In 2006 the Sydney-based organisation d/Lux/MediaArts presented SynCity, a survey tracing three generations of sample culture, while Monash University in Melbourne has established the Australian Video Archive to counter a kind of cultural amnesia in relation to video art in Australia. More recently, in October 2008, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney presented Video Logic, a major exhibition of Australian Video Art featuring key artists in the field, and the Disappearing Video conference, which considered questions of the history of the practice and its future sustainability.

**Mutant Logic** examines Australian artists' moving image practice in relation to history and the archive and the archive and history's relation to practice. The participants are Australian artists, academics and writers whose presentations will be accompanied by screenings of key works.

## >PARTICIPANTS

**JOHN CONOMOS** is a media artist, critic, theorist and Senior Lecturer in film and new media studies at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney. His practice deals with autobiography, identity, memory, post-colonialism and the links between cinema, literature, and the visual arts. His essays were recently published as *Mutant Media* (Power Publications, 2008) and forthcoming is *Rethinking the Contemporary Art School* (September 2009). Conomos's videotapes and installations have been widely exhibited throughout Australia, Europe, USA, Japan, Canada and Latin America. Conomos exhibited in Video Logic (MCA, Sydney, 2008).

**JOHN GILLIES** is an artist and Senior Lecturer in the School of Media Arts, College of Fine Art, University of New South Wales in Sydney where he is also working with Ross Harley on the research project *Video Art Online: from Ubu to Imperial Slacks*, a critical history of video art in Sydney. His work often evolves from collaborations with performers from a variety of disciplines. Gillies's screen work has been shown in festivals such as Videobrasil, Ars Electronica, Museum of Modern Art, Reina Sophia, Madrid; National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, and recently at the Videotheque at Art Basel, Miami Beach. Gillies exhibited in Video Logic and was a facilitator of

the Disappearing Video conference (MCA, Sydney, 2008).

**VIRGINIA HILYARD** is a screen artist based in Sydney who teaches at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney. She has made and exhibited screen and installation works since 1985 when she was an active participant in the Sydney super 8 film scene. She has worked with archive collections of home movies for projects at the Museum of Sydney and Sydney Opera House. Her solo and collaborative works have been exhibited throughout Australia and internationally and she is currently engaged in a three-month residency in the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.

**LYNDAL JONES** is Professor in the School of Creative Media at RMIT University in Melbourne and has a long history of working with new media, video and performance in Australia. She has produced an extensive body of work since the early 1980s and is known for creating long-term projects, initially performance based and later video installation. Her works have addressed the power of the experiential and the development of interactivity. Jones represented Australia at the 2001 Venice Biennale and has exhibited throughout Australia and internationally.

John Conomos, John Gillies and Lyndal Jones are also included in the Figuring Landscapes screening programmes, devised by Catherine Elwes and Steven Ball, Tate Modern 6 – 8 February and touring. <http://www.figuringlandscapes.co.uk>

John Conomos's presentation has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australian Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

**>FOR FURTHER INFORMATION EMAIL STEVEN BALL**

[s.ball@csm.arts.ac.uk](mailto:s.ball@csm.arts.ac.uk)

**>TO BOOK YOUR PLACE EMAIL CHRIS RALLS**

[c.ralls@csm.arts.ac.uk](mailto:c.ralls@csm.arts.ac.uk)