

Media Studios

semester 2 2016

Capturing Creativity: The Video Portrait

Louise Turley

Monday 11.30-2.30pm (54.5.94)

Wednesday 10.30-12.30pm (13.3.11)



Image: *Imagine a Raft (Close Group)*, Jon Cattapan (2013)

How can the contemporary documentary filmmaker capture and represent the artist's creative process?

When I start to paint, it is real agony. I get nervous. The day before, I am already working up to it. Then I get to the studio and, once the image starts to emerge and come together, pleasure kicks in. And then you can see things that no other person can see.

Luc Tuymans, Artist, quoted in *Words of Art: Inspiring Quotes from the Masters* (2013)

description

The image of a 'tortured genius' suffering in their lair for their art has long dominated perceptions of the artist in their studio.

Post, post-modernism, this studio visits another studio - the space of the artist, a creative, fragmented, disjointed and complex place of art making, and home to 16 artists in residence. *Gertrude Contemporary* is a not-for-profit dynamic centre for the production and presentation of contemporary art. Openly fostering 'a culture of risk' with the artist at its centre, Gertrude Contemporary provides a creative community for some of Australia's most celebrated and innovative artists.

You will liaise directly with emerging artists to research, script, shoot and edit a video portrait representing their art making practice. You will learn how to represent an artist's career, investigate their inspirations and record the complexity of contemporary art making practices - in short you will interrogate the very notion of capturing creativity in our time.

However, capturing contemporary creativity can be a hard task: the social, the political and the conceptual often override traditional materiality. In this studio students will be immersed in a world of shape shifting ideas and bits and bytes. You will face many challenges: how to work with artists who are in early developmental phases, how to identify and film a specific creative practice and how to paint a portrait of an artist in a digital age. This studio presents a unique opportunity to work with some of the very best of Australia's emerging artists to produce work that will potentially be featured on the gallery's website.

aims

- to research, write and create a high quality short documentary for the web
- to explore and expand notions of representing creativity in documentary
- to develop abilities to collaborate with artists, stakeholders and others

Documentary Design

Seth Keen

Monday 11.30-2.30pm (rm 9.2.16)
Tuesday 11.30-1.30pm (9.3.12)

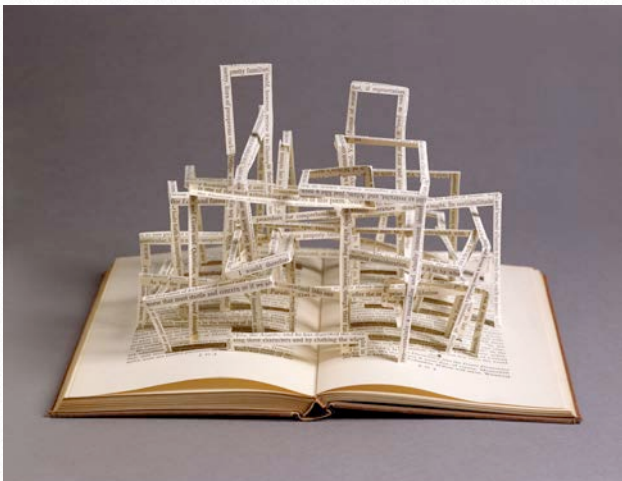


Image: Stephen Doyle in *Hypertext: A Foray into Sentence Structure* (2015 <http://www.doylepartners.com/project/hypertext>)

How can design methodologies be used to produce an interactive documentary?

[I]t's a matter of doing design in order to generate new ideas and to examine what design means. Similarly, we need to make things with media in order to think more thoroughly about the opportunities and risks associated with different materials, tools and services, both within themselves, and when out in the world.

David Gauntlett, academic, in *Making Media Studies: The Creativity Turn in Media and Communications Studies* (2015).

description

This studio focuses on documentary practices on new media platforms and aims to provide you with the skills and knowledge to work with video in interactive media.

In this hands-on studio the focus is on making content and learning through a practice-based inquiry. The aim is to learn practical skills in a real world context, in this case a project that engages with communities externally. Practical skills will be supported with theory, in regards to the integration of design methodologies into professional media practice and developing an understanding of interactive documentary as an expanding mode of new media practice.

As studio participants you will work on the design and production of an interactive documentary that maybe put forward for screenings, exhibition and publication online. Technically you will work with video across a range of cameras and software, including preparing and authoring video for online viewing. The portfolio outcomes will be a collection of linear video works that are used to create an interactive documentary.

aims

- to design and produce an interactive documentary
- to work with the affordances of video, computers and the network
- to investigate how design methodologies can be utilised to adapt to changing media practices

The Korsakow interactive documentary software (OS X or PC) will be have to be purchased by each student for a cost of US\$25.

Exploding Genre

Daniel Binns

Monday 11.30-2.30pm (rm 9.2.15)

Thursday 8.30-10.30am (rm 9.2.18)



Image: Clockwise from top-left: *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927); *Modern Times* (Charles Chaplin, 1936); *Her Night of Romance* (Sidney Franklin; 1924); *Nosferatu* (F. W. Murnau, 1922).

How can genre be encoded/inscribed?

The term ‘genre’ eventually becomes pejorative because you’re referring to something that’s so codified and ritualised that it ceases to have the power and meaning it had when it first started.

Christopher Nolan, director, interview in the *Guardian* (28th August 2002) .

description

Genre poses a seemingly endless problem for film critics, theorists, and filmmakers themselves. In the age of hybrid and networked media, the video store aisle classifications just don’t cut it anymore, appearing arbitrary and restrictive. However, genre research is still a very popular area of study. From a purely practical point of view, though, does the genre still have value? Can it still be a powerful way to impart meaning? This studio will revitalise the concept of genre within various media spaces and platforms, positing that genre — as the term has traditionally applied in film studies — is an active and dynamic process of inscription and interpretation.

This studio will both interrogate and explode various fictional media genres. Students will be asked to research and discuss genre theory, forming their own opinions and learned perspectives on where and how genres emerge. Selected film screenings will encourage you to observe how genre has been inscribed across the history of cinema. The studio will then gravitate towards discussions and practical explorations of how genres might be inscribed in other media platforms. You will produce a number of different artefacts spanning different genres and platforms, before honing in on a single genre for a major project.

Workshops and practice/practical exercises in in camera, sound, editing, production workflows, set etiquette and practice-based research will occur in this studio.

aims

- to learn about various modes of generic expression through reading, active viewing and practical explorations;
- to activate this learning through research responses, practical exercises and ongoing reflection;
- to improve creative and technical expertise through conceptual, exploratory and interrogative media practice.

Good Form: Producing a Comedy Web Series

Jeremy Bowtell

Monday 2.30-4.30pm (rm 9.2.16)
Wednesday 10.30-1.30pm (rm



Image: The 50 Funniest Web Series, *Timeout* (Thursday May 28 2015 <http://www.timeout.com/newyork/comedy/50-funniest-web-series>)

What is a comedy web series, and what are the affordances of producing content within this form?

Never has it been more true that brevity is the soul of wit... If you can't fragment your content into cross-platformed multi-media mini-particles, then what kind of content provider are you exactly?

Stewart Lee, comedian, *ft.com* (April 2011)

description

When you string the words 'comedy web series' together, there appears to be some immediate implications; content that is made up of 'episodes' with recurring narrative themes, distributed online, and funny, to list but a few. However, even at this level of detail the ambiguities of the medium begin to present themselves, and questions arise; what sort of content, and which themes should link segments together so that they become 'episodes'? How is it distributed; through immediate personal connections, promotion through social media, commercial platforms, popular review and aggregation sites, or more? Adding to that, with the potentially vast audience offered online, how do you define who it's for and what will be funny to them?

This is a collaborative studio where you will be working with Creative Writing (Screenwriting) students on the conceptual development of narrative elements of a web series. Throughout the studio you will develop analytical skills to further understand this space, pitch your project and then focus on the production, distribution and audience engagement with the content, which will revolve around several short film 'webisodes'.

The studio will critically explore a range of approaches to comedy and its potential in a web-based episodic form through making a series of short comedy episodes designed specifically for online distribution and viewing.

aims

- to build an analytical knowledge base to better understand the web series mode of production
- to gain insight into relevant industry practice by planning, pitching, creating and distributing a completed web series online
- to develop collaborative skills across various production roles

‘Go Out into the World and Do Great Things’: Experiments in Participatory Documentary

Kim Munro

Tuesday 9.30-11.30am (rm 9.3.12)

Thursday 10.30-1.30pm (rm 13.3.5)



Image: *Broken City Lab* (2010, Justin Langlois, <http://www.brokencitylab.org/blog/lets-colour-project/#comment-2261>)

How can we use participatory, collaborative and co-operative strategies to reinvigorate documentary as a tool for social relationships?

Participatory [projects] have the capacity to elicit perverse, disturbing, and pleasurable experiences that enlarge our capacity to imagine the world and our relations anew.

Claire Bishop, academic, in 'Participation and Spectacle: Where are we now?' *Living as Form* (2011)

description

Documentary films often require the active involvement of people other than the filmmakers. This murky area of participation/collaboration/co-operation/exploitation creates a myriad of practical and ethical dilemmas, even with the best of intentions. An increasing focus on participatory documentary models alludes to a democratic ideal, largely intended to diversify the range of voices and perspectives being presented and to modify the production power structure. Some of these models may have succeeded in getting marginal, dissenting and quieter voices heard.

As media producers interested in the idea of documentary, how do we think about what we can do and what we actually do to engage voices of other people? What is our role as author or collaborator? How do we allow new ideas that might lead to unexpected results and connections to emerge? What can we do to enlist documentary as a way to reengage in our social world with people and their stories?

In this studio, you will address a range of practical, conceptual, and ethical concerns that spring from participatory practices. Is there a meaningful difference between participation and collaboration? How does using participatory models effect the documentary outcome? Where do you, the filmmaker, fit in? You will use film as well as multidisciplinary and hybrid practices drawn from visual ethnography and anthropology, socially situated art, and of course, documentary filmmaking.

With 'subjects' of your own choosing, you will test theories and concepts of participation using a range of mediums and approaches such as photography, writing, interviews, performance, instructional art and filming. Participants in this studio will produce either a range of small-scale documentary items or a larger artefact, depending on their interactions, experiments and engagement with their chosen participants.

aims

- to develop skills and experience with documentary techniques (such as videography, interview, photography, etc.)
- to experiment with emerging modes of participation, collaboration and cooperation in a documentary context.
- to create a range of stand-alone participatory documentary artefacts

Transgression Stories

Catherine Gough-Brady

Wednesday 1.30-4.30pm (rm 13.3.05)
Friday 9.30-11.30am (rm 94.4.26)



Image: *Transgress* by Simon Perčić (after Shepard Fairey)

What do stories of transgression tell us about our society and ourselves?

The only difference between the saint and the sinner is that every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.

Oscar Wilde, author and playwright, in *A Woman of No Importance*, Act III (1893).

description

Stories of transgression form a large part of documentary and fiction content. Transgression is a key dramatic device, often a key point in the narrative: when the rules are broken, and the consequences follow. The transgression can reveal a flawed character, or an uncontrollable situation. It can even involve a moral dilemma with no right solution. It raises the question of what is 'good' and 'bad'.

We are all familiar with the genre of true crime, but transgression stories can be much more complex than murder. They can be as intimate as a child's view of their heroin-addicted dad through to refugee boys trying to make their way out of Sodom into Europe. They can be as funny as understanding Gogol's Overcoat and as abstract as sonic scraps from the Israeli military. Transgression stories question our moral codes, and our moral codes permeate all parts of our lives.

This is an audio studio and you will learn how to manipulate sound to create space, character, story. The transgression stories you create can be documentary or fiction, or a combination. But, they must be audio.

Obviously select this studio if sound interests you. But you can also do this studio if you are interested in exploring the use of transgression in creative works, as the knowledge you gain will apply across the forms.

aims

- to read/watch/listen to works that explore transgression
- to understand how to be an ethical audio creator
- to experiment, by creating audio stories about transgression

Translating Observation

Robin Plunkett

Monday 9.30-11.30am (rm 9.3.12)
Wednesday 1.30-4.30pm (rm 13.3.11))

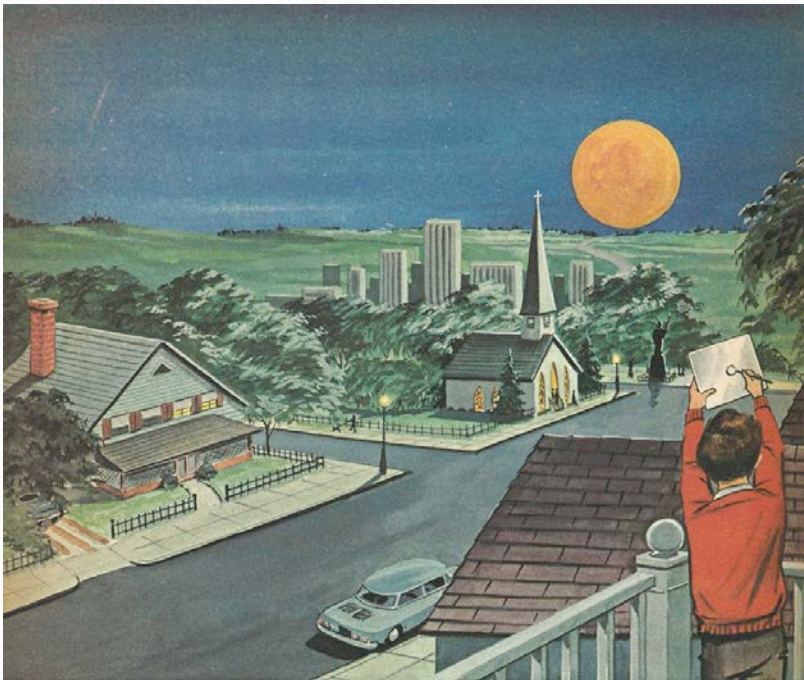


Image: Illustration by George J Zaffo From *The How and Why Wonder Book of Light & Color* (1963)

How can personal observation and experience be translated to the screen in ways not strictly reliant on conventional fiction or documentary approaches?

You must always write when you want to make a film.

Cantal Akerman, filmmaker, in *Bordering On Fiction: Chantal Akerman's D'Est* (1995).

description

This studio is dedicated to experimentation in the development and realisation of film content that sits somewhere between documentary and fiction. A very specific procedure, with writing at its centre, will be applied in the development stage, and the result is likely to lead to idiosyncratic production methods, and highly individual short film works.

The idea is that an experience or observation is expressed in writing without any need to contextualise or narrate, and ultimately translated to film. The emphasis should be on the subjective essence of the observation. The text then becomes a working document that needs to be further translated into a film scene. The scene, or scenes, can take any form, or combination of forms. The objective is to explore cinematic expression free, not of structure and discipline, but of the conventions of storytelling, and the demands typical of documentary production. And to do this, not as an act of systematic resistance, but simply by embracing a particular and alternative starting point.

aims

- to acknowledge and explore the critical function of writing in the development of a film work – but not necessarily that of normal scriptwriting, or the expression of “objective” research
- to learn and practice film craft and production methods (in the service of an unfamiliar outcome)
- to understand our “subject” through the act and phases of making

The News is a Joke: The Rise of TV Comedy News

Leo Berkeley

Thursday 1.30-5.30pm (rm 9.1.24 & TV Studio rm 5.3.03) +

Three additional sessions

Thursday 5.30-10.30pm (TV Studio rm 5.3.03)



Image: *Barack Obama on the Daily Show July 21, 2015* Official White House Photo by Pete Souza [public domain]

Is fake news the real news?

Fake news shows are not only at least as real as the mainstream news, but also ... contribute more to the type of deliberative discourse essential to genuine democracy

Amarnath Amarasingam, author, in The Stewart / Colbert Effect: Essays on the Real Impacts of Fake (2001)

description

This studio will focus on an exploration of TV comedy news: what makes it distinct as a media form, what its appeal is and how it is made. The relationship between serious information and entertainment in television news has always been a blurred one.

However, the rise of fake or comedy news in the 21st century has complicated this relationship in unprecedented ways. Prominent examples of this phenomenon include *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, *The Colbert Report* and *Last Week Tonight* with John Oliver in the US, and *The Chaser's War on Everything*, *The Weekly* with Charlie Pickering and Shaun Micallef's *Mad as Hell in Australia*. Appealing to younger audiences and designed to work across multiple platforms, what is behind the rise of comedy news?

This studio will explore the topic of TV comedy news through viewing, reading, discussing and making various comedy news segments. The multi-camera TV studio will be used for the production of your works. You will develop ideas for comedy news segments, then research, script and produce them over the course of the semester. You will learn about the operation of the TV studio and use it to apply your knowledge of comedy news to the production of several segments.

aims

- to investigate TV comedy news as a media form for entertainment and raising awareness of social issues in 21st century democratic societies
- to develop ideas, research, script, produce and present TV comedy news segments
- to learn how to work in a TV studio as a creative and collaborative media production space

The RMIT TV Studio will be used for the production of the projects on some Thursdays between 5.30-10.30pm. Students are required to attend at least three of these sessions, with specific dates and times to be negotiated.

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